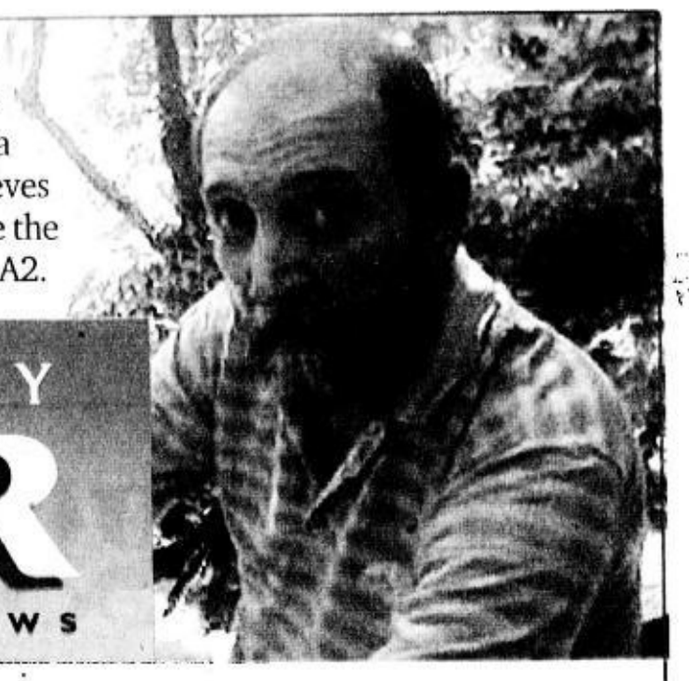
Condom maker offers best job Down Under

CANBERRA—CONDOM makers say it's the world's best job, a "sexecutive position." An Australian company is seeking real life testers for its condom products.

"Got what it takes to be an official condom

CONDOM/ A4

BOSSI IN CAPTIVITY: The first photos of Fr. Giancarlo Bossi since he was abducted June 10 were sent to his best friend, Claretian priest Angel Calvo, in Zamboanga City on a cell phone via MMS on Thursday. Calvo believes the photos were taken recently. Authorities also believe the photos are authentic. Another photo on Page A2.



Dante Ang: I did not do it but Erap print ads good

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

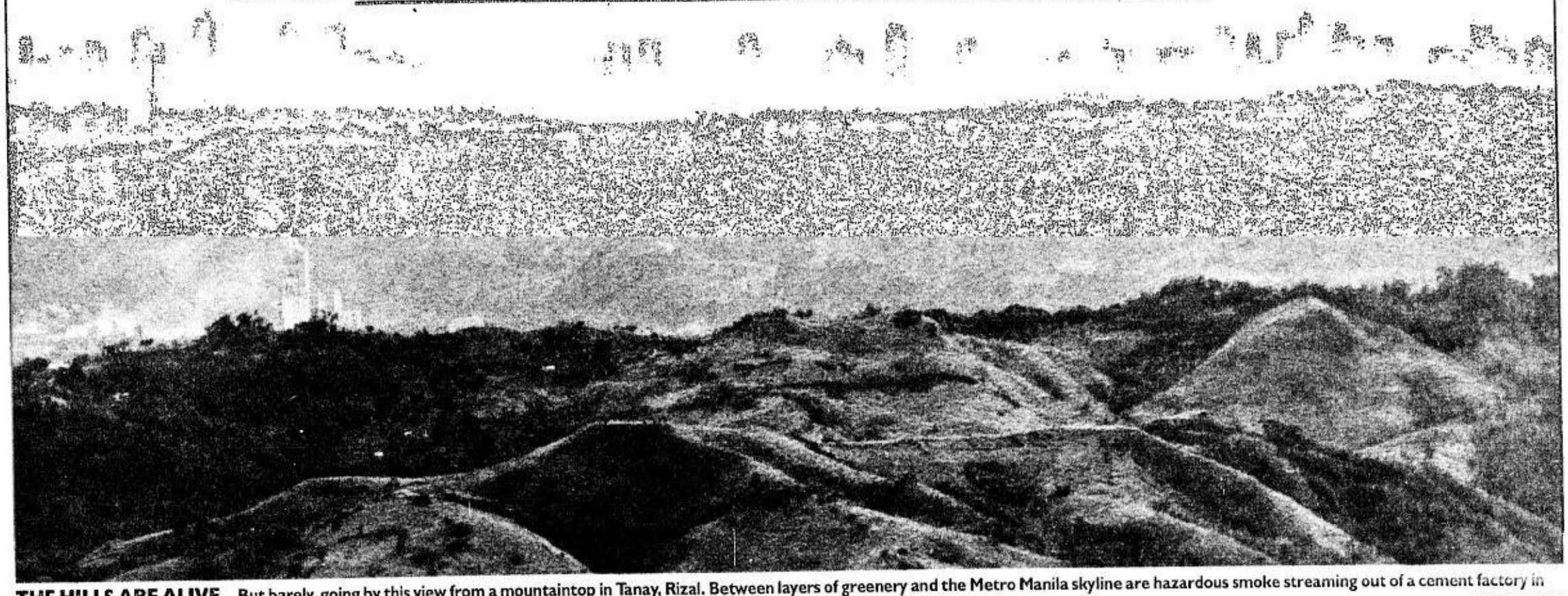
VETERAN PUBLICIST DANTE ANG YESTERDAY denied having a hand in the controversial "Estrada: Guilty or Not Guilty" advertisement, but said he saw nothing wrong in the timing of its publication or its message.

"I am not defending it, but if you ask me if it is good, I don't see anything wrong with it. It's so

DANTE ANG/ A6

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Saturday, July 7, 2007 ★★ 10 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 209 P18 website: www.inquirer.net



THE HILLS ARE ALIVE. But barely, going by this view from a mountaintop in Tanay, Rizal. Between layers of greenery and the Metro Manila skyline are hazardous smoke streaming out of a cement factory in Antipolo and an all-engulfing smog shrouding the cityscape. EDWIN BACASMAS

PCGG loses ₱220-M case

Bedol did not include 38 ERs in his canvass

By Nikko Dizon

THE GENUINE OPPOSITION YESTERday took as proof of fraud 38 election returns with about 7,000 votes from a town in Maguindanao that a GO lawyer said were the first authentic set of election documents from the now controversial voting in the province.

Lawyer Leila de Lima, legal counsel of GO candidate Aquilino "Koko" Pimentel III, said the 38 ERs, representing votes from eight of Pagalungan's 12 villages, yielded votes for senatorial candidates who got zero votes in the provincial canvass prepared by Lintang Bedol, Maguindanao's election supervisor.

The 38 Pagalungan ERs were not in-

BEDOL/ A8

Proclaim us, party-list reps urge Comelec

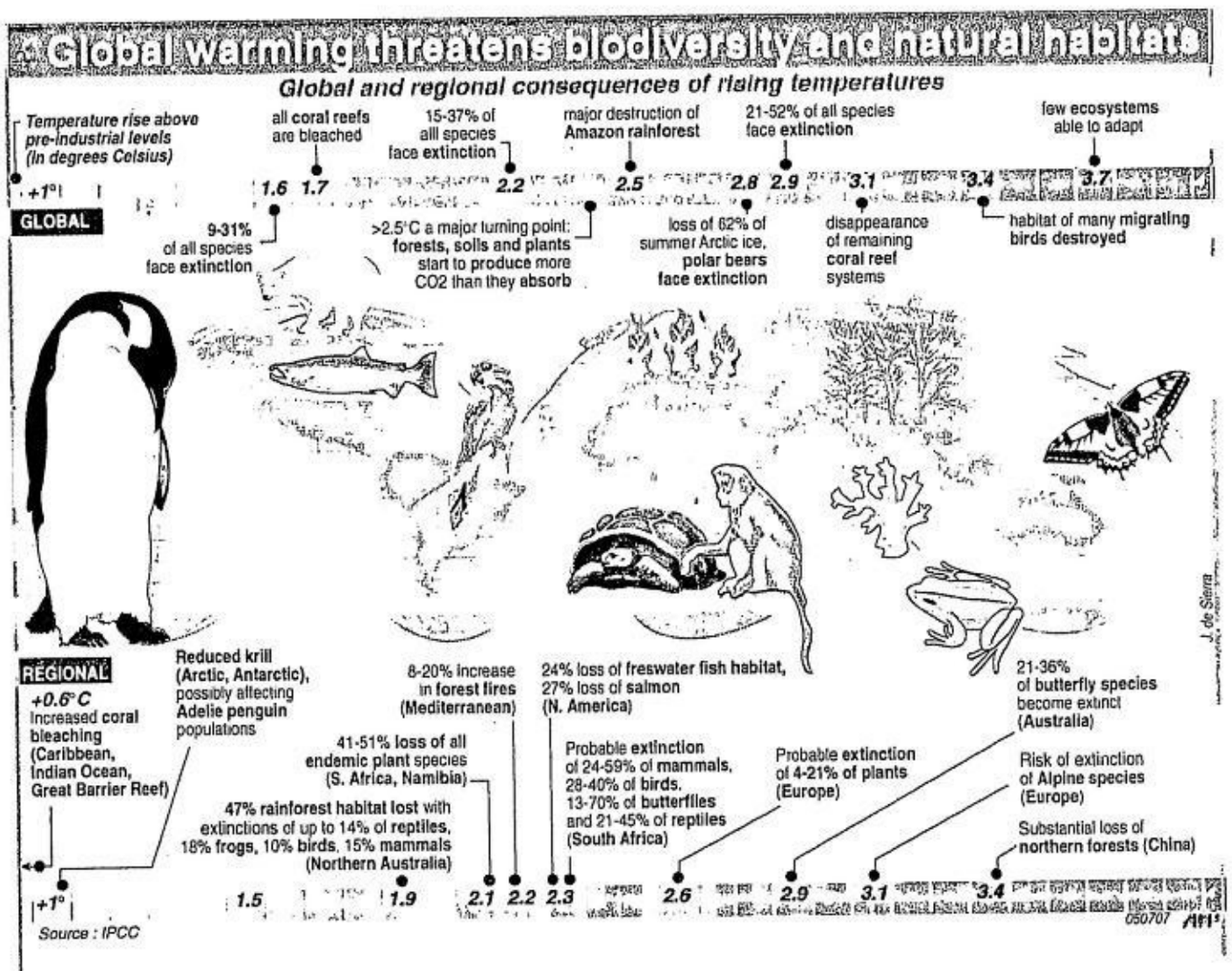
By Nikko Dizon

WITH THE MARGINALIZED SECTORS still unrepresented in the 14th Congress, a coalition of party-list groups is urging the Commission on Elections to make a partial proclamation of those groups that have reached the 2-percent threshold.

"Our appeal to the Comelec is to please proclaim us," Leonila Chavez, representative of the Luzon Farmers' Party/Butil party-list group, said yesterday on behalf of the Party-list Caucus.

The other members of the coalition

PROCLAIM/ A8



LIVE EARTH CONCERTS

Coolest gig: Antarctica band joins rock royalty

LONDON—NUNATAK, AN UNKNOWN rock band from Antarctica, is about to become famous.

However brief its moment in the limelight, the group comprising two engineers, a marine biologist, a meteorologist and a polar guide will be watched by millions around the world when it appears as part of the Live Earth concerts on Saturday.

Live Earth will air two songs by Nunatak performed against a backdrop of icebergs, mountains and sea.

Nunatak gets its name from a Greenlandic word which means an exposed summit of a ridge mountain or peak within an ice field or glacier.

Billed as the "coolest gig in Live Earth," the outdoor performance at the British Antarctic Survey's Rothera Research Station will be pre-recorded and broadcast on the day on television, the Internet and possibly at the gigs themselves.

While rock royalty like Madonna struts her stuff before a live audience of up to 90,000 at London's Wembley Stadium, Nunatak can expect to perform in front of 17 colleagues braving the freezing temperatures of a Southern Hemisphere winter.

"At the moment we have had a sud-

COOLEST/ A4

'Perfect witness' for rebuttal not presented, says court

By Volt Contreras

IN A FRESH BLOW TO THE government's efforts to recover ill-gotten wealth, the Sandiganbayan has junked its 10-year-old bid to recover some P220 million in suspected Marcos deposits at the Security Bank and Trust Co. by upholding the bank's claim that "spurious" papers merely made it appear that it held the money.

The P220 million represented the last tranche that SBTC was supposed to remit to the Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) under an agreement reached in 1987 or a year after the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos was ousted by People Power, according to case records.

In its ruling, the Sandiganbayan wondered why the PCGG did not present one of its own officials who had earlier led an audit examination of the bank's records and who could have been "the perfect witness" to punch holes in SBTC's defense.

The court said it "cannot help but wonder" why the PCGG did not call to the stand the leader of the audit team, Romulo

PCGG/ A6

NBI arrests exec in Internet scam; other suspects named

By Tina G. Santos and Michelle V. Remo

OPERATIVES OF THE NATIONAL Bureau of Investigation arrested on Wednesday an alleged top official of Francswiss Investment which operates the "Francswiss" online, one of the Internet-based "Ponzi" investment schemes believed to have duped unsuspecting investors in the Philippines of P1 billion.

Eleazard Castillo, 26, a native of Cabuyao, Ilocos Sur, and allegedly the chief financial adviser of FS Investment, was arrested by agents of the NBI National Capital Region in an entrapment oper-

NBI ARRESTS/ A8

PNP: Burgos witnesses also disappeared

By Alcuin Papa and Margaux C. Ortiz

WITNESSES IN THE ABDUCTION OF ACtivist Jonas Burgos have themselves disappeared, officials of the Philippine National Police said yesterday.

Senior Supt. Joel Coronel of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) said the witnesses—employees of a Hapag Kainan food stand at the Ever Gotesco mall in Quezon City—had gone missing.

"There are no more witnesses. They are in hiding and have resigned from the company," he said.

Coronel said he and his men were supposed to try and track down the witnesses through their addresses provided by their employer but that he had since been transferred to another unit of the CIDG, the Criminal Investigation and Detection Division.

During his investigation of Jonas Burgos' case, Coronel was chief of the CIDG-National Capital Region unit.

The current CIDG-NCR chief, Senior Supt. Leo Marzan, told the INQUIRER that they had yet to conduct a case conference and find out the latest in the case.

Coronel declined to comment on an INQUIRER report on Friday quoting an intelligence agent as saying that members of a unit in the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (Isafp) were responsible for Jonas' abduction on April 28.

He said he no longer had jurisdiction over

PNP: BURGOS/ A4

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

SATURDAY, JULY 7, 2007

EZ2 FOUR DIGIT

31 26 | 4 2 7 8

Mid-Day SUERTRES Evening

0 0 6 | 8 1 7

(All in exact order)

MEGALOTTO 6/45

2 7 12 14 17 37

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Second FRONTPAGE

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Central and Southern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers and thunderstorms.

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

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Abu tagged in Bossi kidnap

No quick fix to problem, says new defense chief

By Lira Dalangin-Fernandez
INQUIRER.net

MORE THAN A MONTH after the abduction of Father Giancarlo Bossi, Malacañang has tagged the extremist Abu Sayyaf as the group holding the Italian priest and admitted that there is "no quick fix to the problem."

Acting Defense Secretary and concurrent National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales said he told visiting Italian lawmaker Margherita Boniver, sent to Manila by her government to help facilitate Bossi's release, that the Philippine government was exerting all efforts for the safe recovery of the priest.

"But I have emphasized that we are dealing with the Abu Sayyaf and, given our experience with them, it will really take a long time [to resolve the Bossi case]," Gonzales told Inquirer.net in a phone interview.

"There's no quick fix to this problem, especially if we are trying to make sure Bossi is released safely," he added.

Gonzales met with Boniver in Malacañang Friday noon before the Italian lawmaker's meeting with President Macapagl-Arroyo and Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita. *(See related story on Page A15)*

Asked about Boniver's response, Gonzales said she "understands the situation."

He said Boniver was also "satisfied" with what the government, especially members of the Armed Forces who are searching for the priest in Mindanao, was doing. He also told Boniver politicians were assisting efforts to secure "proof of life" from the 57-year-old clergyman's abductors.

Initially, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), which signed a ceasefire with the government, had been helping in the effort to locate Bossi.

But the group has since pulled out its forces from the area, leaving the job entirely to the government.

Boniver flew to Zamboanga Friday to visit the military's Southern Command and get more details of the rescue operations, Gonzales said.

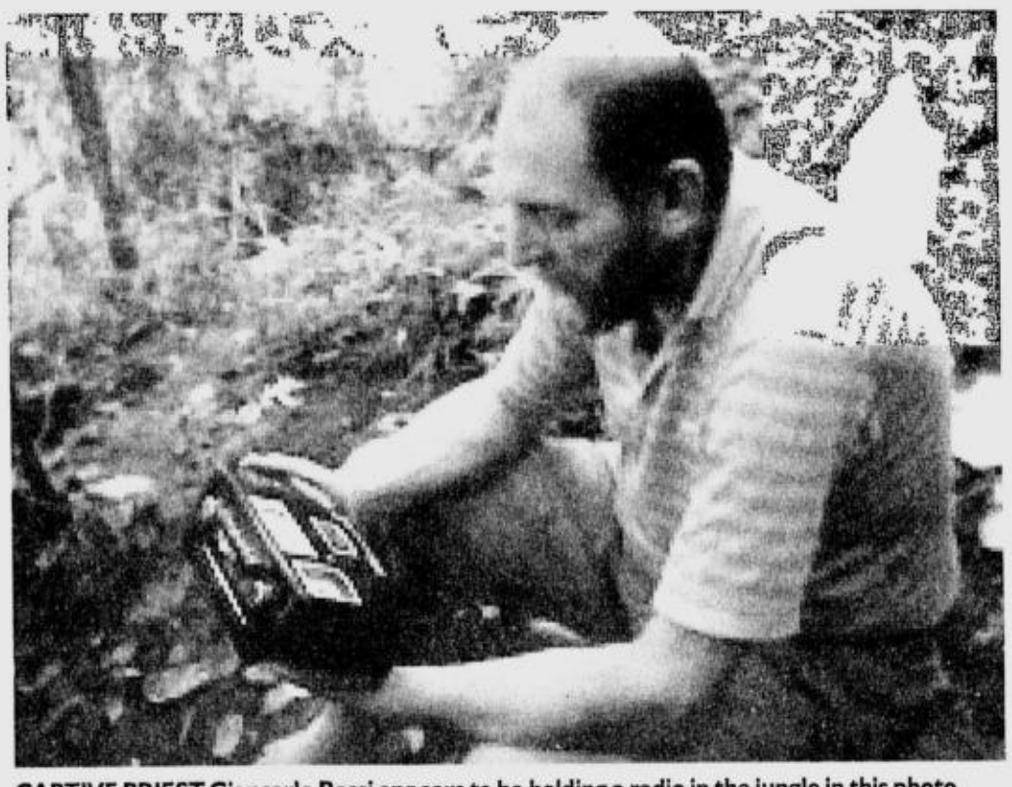
Bossi was kidnapped in Payao town, Zamboanga Sibugay province last June 10 while on his way to celebrate Mass. He is the parish priest of the town.

Boniver, a member of the Italian parliament and former minister of trade for foreign affairs, arrived in the country Thursday to meet with authorities and discuss efforts to have Bossi released safely.

Boniver also met with Armed Forces chief General Hermogenes Esperon, who told her yesterday that more than a thousand soldiers and 200 policemen were taking part in the hunt for Bossi in Mindanao, according to military spokesperson Lt. Col.l Bartolome Bacarro.

"The number of troops that have been poured in there is sufficient to perform the rescue operations," Bacarro said, adding that Boniver had also expressed to Esperon her appreciation of the government's efforts.

With a report from AFP



CAPTIVE PRIEST Giancarlo Bossi appears to be holding a radio in the jungle in this photo received by Claretian priest Angel Calvo of Zamboanga City on a cell phone via MMS on Thursday. Authorities believe the shot is authentic and was sent by his kidnappers.

Solons doubt House savings

THREE CONGRESSMEN LED BY Sorsogon Rep. Jose Solis yesterday expressed doubts over the claim of Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. that the House of Representatives saved money under him in the past three years, including P66 million in 2004.

"De Venecia's office had cited lack of funds to turn down funding requests by congressmen in the past. So, how can he say now that the House had managed to save money during the same period?" Solis said in a press statement.

Outgoing congressman Jacinto Paras made the same statement, adding that congressmen had repeatedly complained of being deprived access to House funds during the 13th Congress.

Paras said a conscious effort by De Venecia to withhold funds had forced congressmen to dip into their own pockets to travel from their respective districts to the House of Representatives in Quezon City.

Worse, Paras said, it was only now that De Venecia caused the release of funds and other benefits to reelected congressmen, including P1 million in travel reimbursements.

Solis said the matter has to be investigated because the belated release of House benefits, if validated, can be seen as an effort by De Venecia to buy support for his speakership bid. De Venecia is seeking to retain the speakership against the challenge of Cebu Rep. Pablo Garcia.

Rep. Carlos Padilla said De Venecia's claim that the House had saved money under him was intended to obscure the true financial status of the House. He said that if the House from 2004 to 2006 was awash in savings as claimed by De Venecia, then many congressmen would have gotten funding for their projects and travels in aid of legislative research.

Speakership race 'all over but the shouting'

By Christine O. Avendaño

THE RACE FOR THE POST OF HOUSE SPEAKER "is all over but for the shouting," according to Mandaluyong Rep. Neptali Gonzales Jr., as he declared yesterday that Pangasinan Rep. Jose de Venecia had clearly won the contest hands down.

Gonzales said his confidence stemmed from the fact that De Venecia's challenger, Cebu Rep. Pablo Garcia, should have been able to demonstrate at this time, or two weeks before the opening of the 14th Congress, that he had the numbers to win the position.

So far, Garcia had not been able to do so, Gonzales said in a phone interview. By his own count, he added, there were fewer than 50 congressmen supporting the Cebu lawmaker's bid to be the speaker.

"With two weeks to go before the opening of Congress and you still don't have the numbers, then there's a problem," said Gonzales, a staunch ally of De Venecia.

He also shrugged off calls that De Venecia agree to the proposal that the House choose its next leader through secret balloting.

No secret balloting

Gonzales said that there was no such thing as a secret balloting in the House. Either one had the numbers to win or he had not, he explained.

He said those calling for a secret balloting were those who did not have the numbers to begin with.

Gonzales said that the challenge De Venecia faced in the new Congress was "how to reclaim intra-parliamentary courtesy" with the Senate as well as among members of the House.

Gonzales said relations between the Senate and the House had soured during the previous Congress, with congressmen even calling for the abolition of the Upper House.

There was even more reason for the House to restore good relations with the Senate, now that it was dominated by senators affiliated with the opposition, Gonzales said.

As for members of the House, he said that restoring civility among themselves was also important. He noted that in the last Congress, congressmen were openly bickering on the floor, even shouting at each other.

"If you are not able to recover or at least promote intra-parliamentary courtesy with the Senate and among members of the House, it would be difficult to shepherd the passage of bills," he said.

Gonzales admitted that he wanted to become the majority leader of the chamber but wouldn't mind settling for the post of senior deputy majority leader.

Inside track

Gonzales said he was taking this position because he was a "believer" in the principle of seniority. To his mind, he said, Iloilo Rep. Arthur Defensor, the incumbent senior deputy majority leader and who was on his last term, had an "inside track" into the majority leader position.

On Thursday, De Venecia said that should he be elected anew as the leader of the House, he would ask incumbent Majority Leader Rep. Prospero Nograles to head the House contingent to the Commission on Appointments.

Gonzales was the majority leader in the entire 12th Congress. Before that, he held the job for three months during the term of Quezon City Rep. Feliciano Belmonte as House speaker.

For his part, Bacolod City Rep. Monico Puentevella yesterday said the winner in the Speakership race should demonstrate a strong political will to crack the whip on absentee congressmen and the political maturity to put his position on the line for reforms.

Puentevella said the opening of the 14th Congress offered a fresh beginning to the House and should signal that no-nonsense reforms and internal discipline among its members would become the norm.

Parole officer backs Atong Ang bid

By Jocelyn R. Uy

THE PROBATION AND PAROLE OFFICER of Charlie "Atong" Ang has no objections to his request at the Sandiganbayan for a 20-day vacation in the US.

Citing humanitarian reasons, Ceres Anonuevo, chief probation and parole officer yesterday joined Ang in asking the antigraft court's Special Division to allow the latter to visit his family in Las Vegas, Nevada, whom he last saw in November 2006.

Ang was placed under a two-year probation after pleading guilty to a lesser offense in the six-year-old plunder case of jailed ex-President Joseph Estrada. He was extradited to the Philippines on orders of a Nevada court in November last year.

In asking the court to allow him to visit his family, he also said that the brief trip would allow him to settle financial obligations he incurred since he was released from the North Las Vegas jail in 2002.

However, Ang has changed his schedule of departure. Instead of leaving on July 15, he has reset it to July 26, Anonuevo said in a comment filed with the Special Division Thursday.

"This office interposes no objection to his travel for humanitarian reasons... it is prayed that probationer be permitted to travel to the US for a period of 20 days more or less," the officer stated.

Earlier, the prosecution filed its comment to the antigraft court, raising no strong objections to Ang's petition.

While it pointed out that granting his request may leave room for violation of probation conditions, the prosecution only asked the court to deduct the period of his travel from his probation period should it allow Estrada's former gambling buddy to fly to the US.

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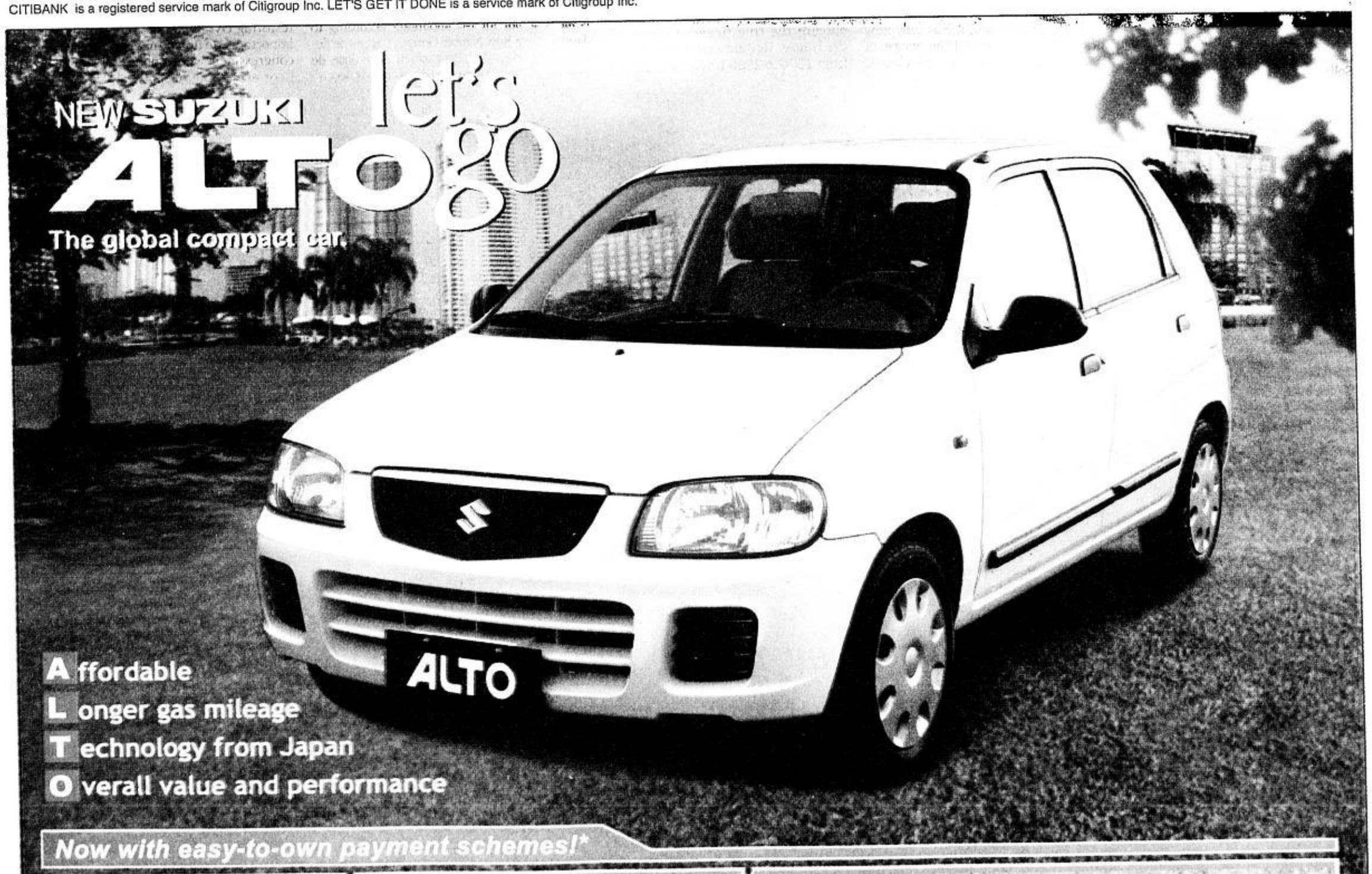

METRO MANILA

SUZUKI AUTO COMMONWEALTH
Prince Motor Corporation
951-2201 to 10

SUZUKI AUTO EDSA
Pilipino Sales Corporation
634-3451 to 57

SUZUKI AUTO KALOOKAN
Matrix Motor Corporation
364-9093 / 365-6098
365-3011 / 365-7796

SUZUKI AUTO MANILA BAY
Wheels, Inc.
556-1485 / 556-1487

SUZUKI AUTO MAKATI
Heidelberg Motor Corporation
616-4097 / 810-1736 / 810-1737

SUZUKI AUTO QUEZON AVE.
Sunny Motors Group, Inc
374-3911 / 411-2720

SUZUKI AUTO SHAW
The Shaw Motor
Plaza Corp.
718-1834 to 35

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Automall Motor Sales
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PNP: Burgos witnesses also disappeared

From page A1

the case.

But Director Geary Barias of the PNP Directorate for Investigation and Detective Management said that as far as he knew, two of the witnesses had resigned but that there was still one witness available to the PNP.

Confirmation

Jonas' mother Edita Burgos yesterday said the INQUIRER report confirmed what his family had known all along.

"People have already told us about the details that appeared in the INQUIRER report about the involvement of the Isafp in my son's abduction," said the widow of late press freedom icon Joe Burgos.

Edita and another son, JL Burgos, showed reporters the artists' sketches of a man and a woman who had been identified by witnesses as among those who forcibly took Jonas from the Quezon City mall.

They said the sketches bore an uncanny resemblance to the artists' sketches of the abductors of five supporters of ousted President Joseph Estrada in Quezon City last year.

"The people who gave us the artists' sketches of the 'Erap 5' abductors had told us to check the similarities," JL said.

The "Erap 5"—Virgilio Eustaquio, Ruben Dionisio, Jim Lucio Cabauatan, Dennis Ebona and PO3 Jose Justo Curameng—were forcibly taken from Eustaquio's house in Kamuning, Quezon City, in May 2006 by military and police intelligence agents in plainclothes, who did not identify themselves.

Prior to confirming the arrest of the five, a military spokesperson denied that Isafp was holding the "missing" men.

Col. Tristan Kison, then AFP public information chief, later admitted that the government operatives were only after Dionisio, whom he alleged to be an intelligence officer of the so-called Special Operations Group of the communist New People's Army.

The four others happened to be with Dionisio at the time, "so our operatives thought of bringing them along," he said.

Conscience

Edita said she was surprised and pleased at the decision of the INQUIRER source to speak out about his knowledge regarding Jonas' abduction.

"I really believe that there are still good people who listen to their conscience," she said.

But she said she was saddened by the intelligence agent's statement that Jonas could be dead.

"As a mother, I want to believe that my son is all right," she said, adding without elaborating that there were still signs that Jonas was alive.

"My son's wife, who is now staying in a faraway province with their baby daughter, is really devastated," Edita said.

She said her grandchild had been crying a lot because the child was used to Jonas putting her to sleep at night.

Coverup

Edita also said she was not shocked at the INQUIRER report because she knew about the supposed code names of the abductors even before the report was published.

"Only the name Tango Lima was new to me," she said.

Edita said she also was not surprised at AFP Chief of Staff Gen Hermogenes Esperon's declaration that the family would not be provided a copy of the Provost Marshal's report on Jonas' disappearance.

"This only bolsters my belief that there really is a coverup," she said.

She also said she did not believe that Jonas was the recipient of vital military information and was abducted because of that knowledge.

"I am not saying that my son is a saint, but if they think that he has committed any offense against the government, they should have filed the proper charges against him in court," Edita said.

She added that she and her family were readying the charges to be filed next week against those they believed to be involved in Jonas' abduction.

Isafp inquiry

Military officials insisted that the Isafp had nothing to do with Jonas' disappearance, saying this was backed by the finding of an internal investigation conducted in May.

According to AFP information chief Lt. Col. Bartolome Bacarro, Isafp chief Brig. Gen. Delfin Bangit told him Thursday night about the investigation that was conducted to find out "if any unit in Isafp was involved in the abduction of Jonas Burgos."

Bacarro quoted Bangit as "conclusively" saying that the investigation showed there was no unit or individuals from Isafp who had anything to do with the abduction."

"He said, 'My conscience is clear: The organization had nothing to do with the abduction of Jonas Burgos,'" Bacarro said.

Bacarro recalled that Bangit met with Edita Burgos on May 5 and assured her his unit had nothing to do with Jonas' disappearance.

Asked whether this meant the AFP was dismissing the claim made by the intelligence agent in the INQUIRER report, Bacarro said: "That's why we have [issued] a challenge. That's why we have been challenging them to come out, and if they have substantive evidence to implicate anybody from the Isafp, to file [charges] before an appropriate court."

Calls for Isafp chief to quit

He said that should there be anyone from the Isafp thus charged, the military would make the person available to investigators.

But the militant Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) called for Bangit's resignation and an "impartial and independent" inquiry into the military's possible involvement in Jonas' disappearance.

"The allegations made by the informant [in the INQUIRER report] are very serious and again reaffirm the belief that the military is behind the abduction of Burgos. We are appalled that while the Isafp is being accused of the abduction, it has continuously denied involvement. We are calling on Commander in Chief Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to relieve Bangit to pave the way for a thorough and independent investigation," Bayan secretary general Renato Reyes said in a statement. *With a report from Christine O. Avendaño*

EDITH Burgos compares artist sketch of the alleged suspects (at left) behind the disappearance of her son Jonas with that of suspects in the arrest and detention of leftists who came to be known as the Erap 5 as they were supporters of former President Estrada. JOAN BONDOC

Condom maker offers best job Down Under

From page A1

tester?" asks an advertisement launched by Durex Australia next to a photo of a busty young woman in a revealing nurse's outfit.

"With this job on your CV, it really will be a chance to brag to your mates about the special skills you possess, not to mention that your new role will work wonders with the opposite sex," Durex Marketing Manager Sam White told local media.

The "bed-testing" position is unpaid, but 200 selected testers would be up for free pack of Durex products, plus a bonus prize of A$1,000 ($854) for one lucky winner, White said.

Only Aussies need apply

In return, testers would have to report back on the feel and performance of the company's products.

Only Australians need apply, and would-be testers will be asked to explain why they should be considered. Humor would help in the application, Durex said.

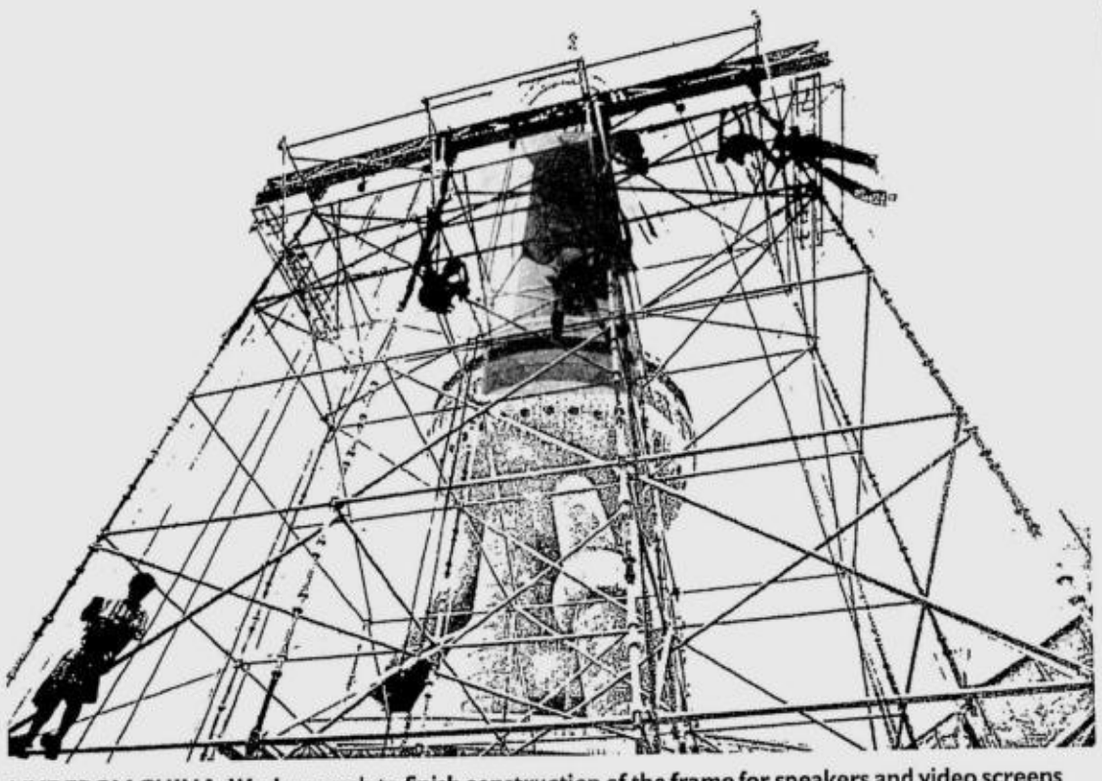
"To apply, simply explain why you think you're right for the position (missionary is acceptable) and you could be eligible for the employee bonus of $1,000," said the ad on website www.durex.com.au.

Honest feedback

Durex said it expected thousands of applicants for the unpaid job of condom tester.

How they test the condoms is not specified, but testers must provide honest feedback about how they find the products.

No deadline is set for evaluating a range of four condoms and other sex products. *Reuters/AP*



LIVE FROM CHINA: Workers rush to finish construction of the frame for speakers and video screens for the Live Earth concert today at the new business district of Shanghai. The concert takes place simultaneously on seven continents and is designed to raise awareness about climate change. REUTERS

LIVE FROM LATIN AMERICA: The stage along Copacabana Beach in Rio de Janeiro is all ready for the Live Earth concert after a court overturned an earlier decision to cancel the show due to concerns over crowd safety. The cancellation would have left out Latin America from the worldwide music fest. AP

Judge rules Live Earth show in Copacabana Beach can go ahead

RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL—A Brazilian judge decided Thursday that South America's Live Earth concert could go ahead as planned after organizers convinced her there would be adequate security at the Copacabana Beach event.

The office of the prosecutor who had sought to cancel the concert confirmed Judge Maria Galhardo had reversed her earlier decision to nix the show, ensuring the worldwide music fest against global warming will happen on all seven continents.

"We still don't know if she will appeal the judge's latest decision," said Daniel Brunet, a spokesman for prosecutor Denise Tarin. Under Brazil's multi-layered court system, judges' decisions can be repeatedly reversed, often within hours.

Chances for the gig featuring Lenny Kravitz, Macy Gray and Pharrell Williams got a boost from police who said they could guarantee security for the show expected to draw 700,000 people.

Rio's free Saturday show was scratched this week after Galhardo agreed with Tarin who argued police would not be able to provide concert security because they are stretched thin with the upcoming Pan American Games and a huge crackdown on slum-based gangs.

Organizers appealed to Galhardo after authorities reversed course and said police were now available because an open-air gospel music show scheduled for the same time was switched to a site where fewer officers will be needed.

Tarin last year imposed restrictions on a free concert by the Rolling Stones on Copacabana that drew 1 million people.

She said at the time that Copacabana is not appropriate for huge concerts because the setting makes it difficult for police to craft "the slightest viable security plan."

The Rio event is the only free concert for Live Earth, founded by Kevin Wall, an Emmy-winning concert producer. Proceeds from the other concerts will go toward the Alliance for Climate Protection, a nonprofit organization chaired by former US President Al Gore. *AP*

Coolest gig: Antarctica band joins rock royalty

From page A1

den drop in temperature—it is minus 18 degrees (Celsius) outside," Matt Balmer, lead singer of the band, told Reuters by telephone from Antarctica.

"You've just got to be very quick getting the songs done."

The 22-year-old engineer said he and his fellow musicians had been rehearsing in the last few days and would record the performance on Thursday or Friday, in time for Saturday's event.

"It's quite daunting in a way, but on the other hand we don't have TV and that much media really," he said.

Heightened awareness

"What we see is through the Internet. It's hard to understand how much hype is going on. When we play there are 17 people on the base, so it's just a bit of fun really and hard to get the bigger picture."

Organizers hope the series of concerts across the world will attract a global audience of up to two billion people, raise awareness about climate change and encourage people to alter their lifestyles to help the environment.

Balmer said it was an issue close to his heart.

Gore's promise

"I was very passionate about it when I came down here to work," he explained. "People have to start to understand it more and the more scientists can understand the more quickly we can put measures in place to prevent it."

Nunatak's performance means that Al Gore, the former US vice president spearheading Live Earth, can deliver on his promise to hold at least one gig on every continent.

Under threat

The concerts are to be held in Sydney, Tokyo, Shanghai, London, Hamburg Johannesburg and New York. A concert in Rio de Janeiro is under threat due to security concerns. *(Story above.)*

The British Antarctic Survey says temperatures in the western part of the Antarctic Peninsula have risen by nearly 3 degrees Celsius during the last 50 years, several times the global average and matched only by Alaska and Siberia. *Reuters*

RICE STRATEGIES

National Food Authority administrator Jessup P. Navarro (2nd from right) discusses with officers and members of the Alyansa ng Industriyang Bigas Inc. (Anib) the agency's rice distribution strategies for the coming lean months of July to September during the Anib's first national board meeting recently. Navarro, guest speaker of the meeting, called on the Anib, led by its national president Robert Hernandez (3rd from right), to support the agency in the proper distribution of government rice nationwide. Anib is composed of over 22,500 licensed rice retailers and grains businessmen.

Appeals court chides ex-solon for contempt

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE COURT OF APPEALS HAS REPRIMANDED the father of two slain brothers for claiming that its justices had been "bought" and would acquit a former congressman convicted for the double murder.

The appellate court's Sixth Division cited for contempt Ricardo Quintos, whose sons Paul and Michael, were killed in 1997 in Occidental Mindoro.

Former Rep. Jose Villarosa, together with six others, were convicted for the double murder on March 1, 2006.

Villarosa has since appealed his conviction.

In May this year, Quintos filed a motion asking the justices of the Seventh Division from hearing the appeal, claiming they could not be impartial.

He also claimed to have received reliable reports that Villarosa had bought the justices and that a decision acquitting the former congressman had been written.

The Seventh Division was then composed of Justices Noel Tijam, Renato Dacudao and Sesinando Villon. Tijam and Villon are now members of the Sixth Division.

In a resolution dated June 28, 2007, the appellate court denied Quintos's motion which it described as irresponsible, reckless, malicious and unfounded.

It also ordered Quintos to behave prudently and warned not to impute false, malicious and unfounded accusations or insults against the court.

It also warned the parties that any act to influence, malign or subvert its functions would give rise to penalties.

The appellate court said Quintos failed to substantiate his claims in his motion and his statements mere "innuendos."

"Not a single piece of evidence has been presented to prove that this Court has been influenced by appellant Villarosa, or that it has prepared or is preparing a decision in Villarosa's favor for a consideration," it said.

Quintos' motion to inhibit was also an attempt to "coerce and influence" the court to rule in his favor, it added.

The court also said granting the motion to inhibit would send the wrong signal that an unsatisfied party could just dislodge a judge from a case by filing such a motion even without proof. It would also encourage people to keep transferring their case from one division to another if they think they would get an unfavorable ruling, it added.

Prosecutor convicted of bribery

By Jocelyn R. Uy

THE SANDIGANBAYAN YESTERDAY CONvicted the then assistant prosecutor of Manila for accepting a P5,000 bribe and sentenced him to 12 years in jail.

The antigraft court's Fifth Division found Constancio Velasco guilty of violating the antigraft law and of indirect bribery for demanding and receiving money in exchange for a favorable action on a criminal complaint he was investigating.

Court records showed that Velasco was tasked to conduct a preliminary investigation of the complaint filed by a certain Ma. Lourdes Salvador Pe Benito against her neighbors, Eduardo and Clarissa Magbitang, in July 2001.

The following month, the Magbitang's counsel filed with Velasco's office a petition to dismiss the oral defamation complaint. Benito was told to file a comment on the said motion.

When Benito went to the assistant fiscal's office to file her comment, Velasco allegedly handed her a piece of paper in which he had written the amount of P5,000.

The complainant asked him if it was the penalty she had incurred for the complaint she filed but Velasco allegedly told her that it was for him and so he could elevate her complaint to the court.

Velasco was caught red-handed in an entrapment operation conducted by the National Bureau of Investigation on Nov. 8, 2001 at a Chinese restaurant in Quiapo, Manila, where he and Benito agreed to meet for the money—five P1,000 bills earlier marked by the police.

The NBI investigation disclosed that he was positive for fluorescent powder, records showed.

In his defense, Velasco claimed that the whole incident was a set-up. He alleged that the money was Benito's payment for the cell phone the latter bought from him minutes before he was arrested.

However, the antigraft court found his accounts "very unnatural, unusual and wanting in any possible motive and therefore, improbable and unworthy of credit."

The court further stated that Velasco's acts, which were done in bad faith and caused "undue injury" or actual damage to Benito, constituted a violation of the antigraft law.

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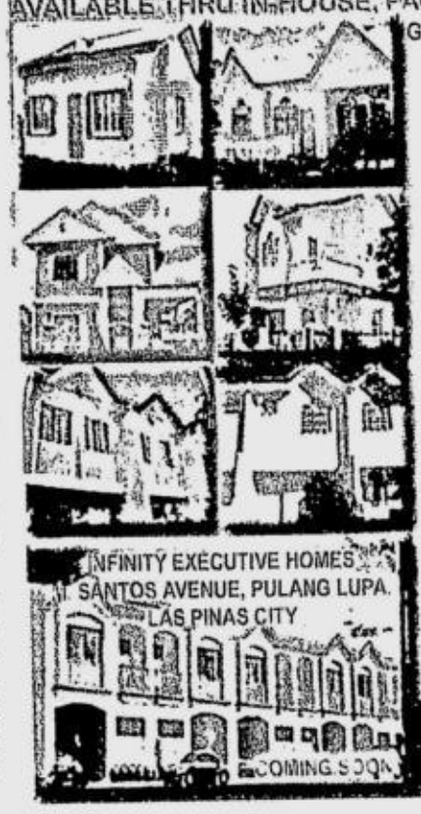

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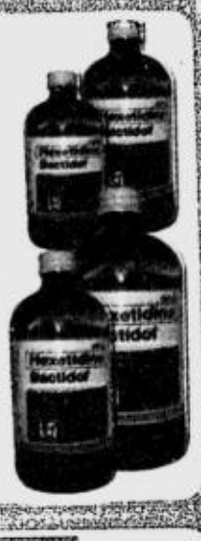

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Lawyer not quite upbeat on Erap fate

By Leila B. Salaverria

LAWYER ESTELITO MENDOZA yesterday said Joseph Estrada and his co-accused were at a disadvantage given the current situation of the justices of the Sandiganbayan's special division.

But Mendoza, a legal counsel of Estrada, said he would be "extremely disappointed" if ousted President would be convicted because he was confident about his arguments.

He also said the justices had "a heavy burden" because of the fact that they were appointed by President Macapagal-Arroyo. But he added that he had "full confidence" in the court.

According to Mendoza, Sandiganbayan Presiding Justice Teresita de Castro was named head of the antigraft court by Ms Arroyo although appointed there by then President Fidel Ramos.

Justices Francisco Villaruz and Diosdado Peralta are also Arroyo appointees.

Compounding the problem is the fact that De Castro and Villaruz have been nominated to the Supreme Court, Mendoza said.

"The success and the objective of the administration of justice is only attained when it appears to the people that it is fair and just. Now in this case, the justices who compose the division have a very heavy burden," Mendoza told reporters.

"It is a heavy burden because it is the burden of the court by their decision to demonstrate and show that the decision was rendered solely on the basis of facts and the law—nothing more, nothing less," he said.

Long process

Mendoza said another factor complicating the situation was the fact that in the past, judges were promoted after convicting the accused in high-profile cases.

He said, however, that he was not saying these judges were unqualified to serve at their new posts.

The "long and delayed" process before a trial is concluded is also another factor working against the accused, Mendoza said. Justices sometimes think that if they acquit the long-detained accused, people will think that the accused has been a victim of injustice, he said.

Asked if he thought the situations he mentioned would work against his client, Mendoza said: "This situation I've mentioned has put all accused at a disadvantage, not just President Estrada."

He added: "So there is this apprehension. I think it is not well-founded but you cannot remove it, and it will affect the appearance of justice.

MENDOZA: Justices have a heavy burden but I have full confidence in the court.

"I think Justice de Castro has already denied this, but she might be influenced by her desire for promotion to the Supreme Court. This is unfortunate because Justice de Castro is very well qualified. This is an unfortunate situation; she's in a no-win, no-win."

Wrong signal

A civil organization calling itself Tanglaw ng Bayan urged Ms Arroyo to drop any plan to grant executive clemency to Estrada in the event of conviction.

The Tanglaw spokesperson, Prof. Bayani Santos Jr., said the Palace announcement that the President was open to pardoning Estrada was "sending a wrong signal" and "portraying a travesty of the justice system in the country."

Santos also chided former Vice President Teofisto Guingona, who had called for the ousted President's release.

"He is saying that Estrada has found new light. Well, in his case he is leading the nation to darkness," Santos said in a statement.

Santos warned that airing the planned pardon this early could "create impressions that a deal has been struck between the Palace and the Estrada group."

He appealed to the President "to let justice take its normal course," adding:

"We urge the President to show that in this country, when a person is guilty, he pays for that crime."

According to Santos, Tanglaw "respects the person of the deposed President and acknowledges the aspiration of other quarters for a closure to the issue and the call for unity."

Ignorance

"We must not, however, peg a price or condition to that aspiration, especially if the tag price would be a questionable precedent," he said.

Sen. Joker Arroyo weighed in on the Estrada issue, saying the deposed President had remained ignorant of controversial issues despite his long experience in government.

Arroyo made the statement in reaction to Estrada's claim that there was no closure on the Jocelyn "Jocjoc" Bolante and "Hello Garci" cases because the senator, who was then chair of the Senate blue ribbon committee, sat on these cases.

"President Estrada cannot quite get it. Despite his five years as senator, six years as Vice President, and about three years as President, he has not learned to ask before he speaks—a most elementary thing," Arroyo said.

Arroyo said that had Estrada bothered to ask from the Senate, he would have been informed that the investigation on Bolante, a former agriculture undersecretary involved in a fertilizer scam, was principally conducted by then Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr., chair of the Senate agriculture committee.

Arroyo said that as blue ribbon committee chair, he was merely asked by the Magsaysay committee to help in the drafting of the committee report, which he did.

He said a formal committee report was duly submitted to and approved by the Senate in plenary.

"That is why Bolante cannot return to the Philippines. What more does President Erap want?" Arroyo said.

Bolante is currently in a US prison.

Arroyo said the "Hello Garci" case involving former Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano was referred to the defense committee chaired by Sen. Rodolfo Biazon.

He said the blue ribbon committee had no participation in that investigation.

Barking up wrong tree

"Whether there was closure or not should have been addressed to the secretariat of the defense committee. It is as simple as that. Erap looks ridiculous, barking up the wrong tree, so to speak, because of ignorance," Arroyo said, adding:

"I would have preferred to keep quiet on this. After I prosecuted President Estrada in the impeachment trial in 2001, I have not said a word on the subject. I even declined to be a witness in his plunder trial. I wish him well if he is acquitted. But he has no license to say, with complete abandon, falsehoods on matters that are easily verifiable." *With a report from Cynthia D. Balana*

Dante Ang: I did not do it but Erap print ads good

From page A1

innocuous, so neutral," Ang, a former adviser of President Macapagal-Arroyo, said in a phone interview.

Malacañang, through Ang, is suspected of being responsible for the ad that appealed to the public to respect the decision of the Sandiganbayan on the jailed President Joseph Estrada's guilt or innocence with respect to the plunder charge lodged against him.

"I have nothing to do with it. Being a member of the advertising industry, I have many friends in the business, including Skoal," Ang said in reference to the ad agency that placed the full-page ads in major broadsheets, including the INQUIRER, last Wednesday.

A Skoal staffer confirmed that the agency placed the ads in behalf of the group "Friends for Democracy." She refused to identify the members of the group, citing a confidentiality agreement with clients.

Freedom of expression

Ang said that as far as he was concerned, the ad was just an exercise in freedom of expression.

"What's wrong with the timing? You don't need a rocket scientist to tell you that the Sandiganbayan will hand down its decision in 90 days after all sides have rested their case. It's been a month since, and the decision is expected to be out soon," he said.

On the ad's content, Ang said any sober reader would know that it did not say whether Estrada was guilty or innocent: "It just says, Let us respect the decision. We know that any decision will inflame the passions of either camp—anti-Estrada [if not guilty] or pro-Estrada [if guilty]."

But Estrada said on Thursday: "It appears that my case will go [the way of a conviction]. They are already conditioning the minds of the people for such an event.

"I counted the ads and added up the total [cost]; it will easily reach more than P1 million. Any Tom, Dick and Harry can't just come up with that amount. It's Malacañang that is behind the ad."

Dangerous situation

Presidential adviser on legal affairs Gabriel Claudio said Estrada was creating a "dangerous" situation by accusing Ms Arroyo of pressuring the antigraft court to issue a guilty verdict.

"Speculations aired in public about the outcome of the Erap case can unjustly affect the credibility of the Sandiganbayan's verdict, whichever way it goes. Such speculations and forecasts, including false accusations about the Palace trying to influence the court decisions, are both unfair and dangerous," Claudio said in a text message.

He noted the Estrada claim that the President had told Cebu Archbishop Ricardo Cardinal Vidal and El Shaddai's Bro. Mariano "Mike" Velarde that she wanted Estrada convicted.

"To obviate an environment of adversity when the verdict comes out, it is important for the public to accept such verdict with credulity and respect. Speculating and second-guessing can only cause undue tension and agitation. They should be stopped," Claudio said.

He also said that unlike Estrada, the Palace had exercised every restraint to express any prediction or preference regarding the outcome of the case.

"But it must defend itself against false accusations of interference or putting pressure on the court. It is in the interest of harmony and peace that the government has kept its distance from judicial process to ensure that the court's verdict will be handed down with legal thoroughness, Independence, transparency and equity," Claudio said.

ESTRADA: I reject executive clemency. Why should I accept clemency, I did nothing wrong.

ANG: I don't see anything wrong.

Denials

On Thursday, Cardinal Vidal denied that the President had spoken about Estrada's supposed conviction.

Mel Robles, administrator of the Light Rail Transit Authority and a spokesperson for Mike Velarde, yesterday also said as much.

Robles said Velarde had been calling for humanitarian treatment of Estrada while his plunder case was being tried.

"It's an open secret that Brother Mike has always advocated for temporary liberty for Erap, whether on bail or recognizance, pending the resolution of his case. And every time he expresses this position to the President, she would always say that it is for the courts to decide," Robles told the INQUIRER.

He said he was present when these discussions took place between Ms Arroyo and Velarde several times.

Velarde, a spiritual adviser of Ms Arroyo, is in the United States to attend an El Shaddai rally in Los Angeles and to undergo his annual medical checkup in San Francisco, according to Robles.

No clemency

In a phone interview on Thursday, Estrada told the INQUIRER he was certain that Malacañang had successfully pressured the Sandiganbayan to convict him of plunder.

But he said he continued to pray that the court would in the end decide his fate "based on the rule of law, not on politics."

Estrada said that in the event of a guilty verdict, he would consult his lawyers for an appeal but would reject outright executive clemency from Ms Arroyo.

"Why should I accept clemency? I did nothing wrong," he said by phone from his detention quarters at his vacation estate in Tanay, Rizal.

The issue of clemency for Estrada has repeatedly cropped up whenever attempts at reconciliation between the camps of the ousted leader and Ms Arroyo made the news.

His being 70 years old qualifies Estrada for executive clemency.

"I'm not only hoping but I'm also praying that the justices of the Sandiganbayan will decide the case based on justice and the rule of law, not on politics," Estrada said.

He also said he recognized the supposed vulnerability of the justices. "I have received reports that two of the justices want to make the crossover to the Supreme Court. The other one, I believe, is eyeing a promotion." *With reports from Juliet Labog-Javellana, Norman Bordadora and Cynthia D. Balana*

Kiko: Shut up

SEN. FRANCIS PANGILINAN YESterday called on administration officials to stop talking about the Sandiganbayan verdict on Estrada's case lest they be accused of trying to influence the decision.

"The recent public statements on the Erap case coming from administration officials do not do the case and the Sandiganbayan any good," Pangilinan said.

"They create the image that Malacañang is trying to influence the court. The statements made undermine the independence of the Sandiganbayan," he said, adding that Malacañang should maintain silence even in the face of questions from the media.

Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano said he believed that the administration had failed to show Estrada was guilty as charged.

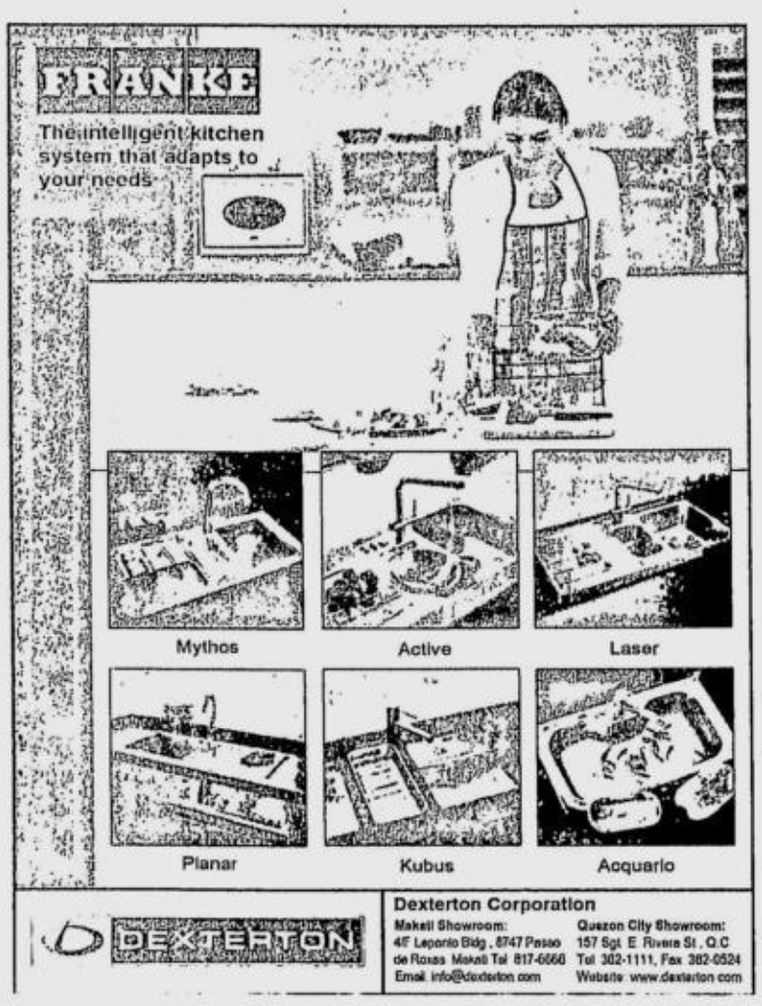
He pointed out that it was the defense, and not the prosecution, which presented the controversial second envelope that supposedly contained Estrada's bank transactions during the latter's impeachment trial.

Cayetano also expressed doubt that the administration was sincerely for genuine reconciliation.

"The President keeps saying, 'Let's have peace, focus on work and move on,' but the administration keeps persecuting its critics. It's the administration that is creating political turmoil," he said.

Sen. Benigno Aquino III said the test of guilt beyond reasonable doubt was mandatory.

"A central accusation is former Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis Singson's claim regarding [Estrada's having benefited from] the tobacco excise tax. This was not proven in the reenactment. The amount of money claimed could not be fitted inside the bags," Aquino pointed out.



PCGG loses ₱220M in Marcos bank deposits

From page A1

Bernardino, or "any other witnesses for that matter ... to rebut the testimonies and the judicial affidavits of (SBTC's) witnesses."

"Plaintiff is aware all along that it was Bernardino who knew the entire background about the spurious transactions or telexes. Having headed the two audit examinations of SBTC, he could have been the perfect witness to disprove the claims of defendant's witnesses," the court noted.

The court further surmised that Bernardino's testimony may have been "willfully suppressed by the plaintiff."

"The plaintiff had all the opportunity to present him on rebuttal but opted not to do so," the court added.

'Forged signatures'

The PCCG-led audit team had found the P220 million to be fictitious since the transactions were made through "spurious telexes" containing "forged signatures."

The bank cited these "fictitious transactions" which were uncovered by the PCGG-led audit team to insist that it "never actually received the amount."

The latest ruling by the antigraft court's Fifth Division dealt another blow to the PCGG, the agency tasked with recovering the ill-gotten wealth of the Marcoses and their cronies.

Early this month, the PCGG lost a graft case filed against former officials of the Development Bank of the Philippines in connection with a nearly P192-million loan that the DBP extended to a company of the late Marcos crony Roberto S. Benedicto for a soybean processing project.

Marcos deposits

In the 1987 agreement, the antigraft court noted that the SBTC "acknowledged" that it was then holding deposits of the Marcoses and their cronies totaling around P981.4 million. The bank agreed to return the whole amount to the PCGG in seven, biannual installments.

But in 1997, the PCGG sued the SBTC at the Sandiganbayan after the bank began holding back the release of the remaining balance of P220 million.

The antigraft court finally reached a judgment in the 1997 civil case by convening a special division of five justices, who then voted 3-2 in favor of dismissing the PCGG's complaint for lack of merit. The ruling was promulgated on May 29.

3-2 ruling

Those who voted for the dismissal were Associate Justices Roland Jurado (who penned the decision), Teresita Diaz Baldoz, and Samuel Martirez. Associate Justices Ma. Cristina Cortez Estrada and Norberto Geraldez dissented.

During the trial, the bank argued that documents pointing to the existence of the P220 million as of 1986 turned out to be consisting of "spurious telexes" containing "forged signatures" and other features which did not comply with the bank's standard practices.

The SBTC was citing the findings of the second of two consecutive audit examinations conducted on the bank, which were both led by a PCGG representative.

Bogus transactions

The supposedly bogus transactions mainly involved multimillion dollar remittances to the SBTC from different foreign banks, namely Morgan Guaranty-New York, Wells Fargo-San Francisco, Bankers Trust-NY and Bank of Nova Scotia-NY.

The court recalled in the ruling: "Being fictitious, the audit team recommended that the amount of US$11.06 million or P220.05 million be deducted from the SBTC's principal obligation (to the PCGG)."

The bank's defense was largely hinged on the testimony given by accountant Rowena Gallardo, then a financial analyst of the Credit Information Bureau Inc.

Gallardo was a member of the PCGG-led auditing team.

Among other defense witnesses, Gallardo explained to the court that the P220 million "should not form part" of the total amount SBTC owed to the PCGG under the 1987 agreement.

"We find that the defense witnesses are credible and have delivered credible testimonies on the matter of spurious transactions," the court said.

The plaintiff PCGG, it said, failed to "overthrow the evidence created against it" pertaining to the spurious transactions

A "VICTIM" cries for help and other "casualties" are scattered on the runway while an aircraft (left) burns in yesterday's emergency drill at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport. JESS YUSON

Rescue drill turns real

By Tarra Quismundo

IT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE A DRILL IN emergency preparedness.

An aircraft in distress plows into shanties, killing dozens of passengers and residents and injuring many more. Rescue workers then rush to the scene to save more lives.

But the Crash and Rescue Exercise (CREX) in Parañaque turned real yesterday when one of the 'rescue choppers' caught fire toward the end of the drill, sending firetrucks rushing to the helicopter to help put out the fire.

"The engine bogged down," said the pilot, Navy Lt. Denz Jomolo in a brief interview.

The Philippine Navy chopper, a BO-105, caught a small fire in its main rotor as it landed at the drill site at the Aseana Business Park around 11 a.m. yesterday. It was on its third 'casualty pick-up' and had just dropped off two batches of 'casualties' at the Makati Medical Center when the incident happened.

Two pilots and two others were on board the helicopter when the blaze occurred.

Jomolo said a fire extinguisher inside the chopper was used to immediately put out the fire. The minor blaze was put out within minutes, sparing any real casualty in the rescue drill which the Manila International Airport Authority (Miaa) conducts every two years.

"Anything that happens has a negative and positive effect. In this case, it was good because we can evaluate really how old our equipment are. And we saw really how fast our rescue workers could respond because you saw how the firetrucks rushed here even without being ordered to do so," said airport security chief retired Gen. Angel Atutubo.

Atutubo said military aviation probers would investigate the incident. The troubled chopper was among several aircraft used in the exercise. Besides the Navy, the Philippine Air Force and the Philippine Coast Guard also sent choppers to take part in the drill.

Yesterday's CREX gathered national and local emergency response units for one of the biggest rescue drills staged regularly.

Miaa holds the exercise every two years as required by the International Civil Aviation Organization, which shall then assess whether the response time and multi-agency coordination measured up to international standards.

"The capital sin of any disaster response organization is complacency and denial... that nothing wrong is going to happen. That's why we're holding drills like this to prevent complacency and denial," said Dr. Anthony Golez, of the National Disaster Coordinating Agency, who observed the drill.

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Bedol did not include 38 ERs in his canvass

From page A1

cluded in Bedol's canvass.

The ERs were kept locked in chains in a metal box by members of the town's Board of Election Inspectors.

It was a heroic act, according to Lima.

The ERs took more than a month after the elections to be canvassed after one election officer of the town, Elisa Gasmin, went missing. She hasn't been found yet.

De Lima said while the number of votes that the ERs contained had no "statistical" significance in the outcome of the race between Pimentel III and the lone Team Unity candidate left standing, Juan Miguel Zubiri, the Pagalungan ERs were key to a case filed by Pimentel III at the Supreme Court seeking to stop the proclamation of the 12th winner in the senatorial race because it would be based on fraudulent election results.

De Lima said what the authentic Pagalungan ERs did was "highlight the incredulity of the canvassed results for the rest of Maguindanao."

"I think this is one good reason for the NBC (National Board of Canvassers) to revisit the ERs (of Maguindanao)," she said.

ERs from four villages of Pagalungan that showed several opposition candidates receiving zero votes were canvassed in the provincial level by Bedol.

A retabulation by a board, led by Comelec lawyer Emilio Santos, also registered zero votes for the same candidates that got zero from Bedol's canvass.

"It defies logic and reason why candidates received votes in these eight barangays of Pagalungan and got zero in the four other barangays in the same town which were canvassed in the provincial level," said De Lima.

"It is not consistent with common experience," she said.

The results of the Pagalungan ERs have not been announced as of 7 p.m. last night.

Among the candidates who received zero votes in the provincial tally but got votes in the 38 Pagalungan ERs were GO Senators-elect Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III, Alan Peter Cayetano, Panfilo "Ping" Lacson, and Antonio Trillanes IV and losing candidates, John Osmeña, Sonia Roco, and Nikki Coseteng.

But George Garcia, lawyer of Zubiri, said the results from the 38 Pagalungan ERs were not proof of fraud.

What the results did, he said, was "strengthen the belief that if there are opposing candidates in the town, there would be votes for the opposition."

PIMENTEL: Uncanvassed ERs key to the case he filed with high court.

ZUBIRI: Still hanging in there.

"It was possible that there were zero votes in the 21 other Maguindanao towns because there was concentration of forces, that these were bailiwicks of the administration," Garcia told reporters.

'Command votes'

Several weeks prior to the elections, Maguindanao Gov. Andal Ampatuan promised to give P1 million to each mayor of the province who could deliver a 12-0 result for TU.

In subsequent press releases, the TU described this as "command votes."

De Lima said the unraveling of the 38 Pagalungan ERs was a big help to Pimentel III's case at the Supreme Court.

"We hope to convince the Supreme Court that we really need to prove before the NBC that the first and second provincial CoCs were statistically improbable," De Lima said.

"It's a mystery, it's incredible that there were no ERs produced in the other municipalities," she said.

Garcia, however, said the continuing opposition allegation of fraud, and the demand to re-examine the ERs in the entire province, could "lead to an unending canvassing of votes."

"It will be a dangerous precedent because no one can now prevent other candidates from asking the ERs to be retrieved," the TU lawyer said.

"The problem of the opposition is they failed to prove these documents (municipal certificates of canvass) were not authentic."

He said instead of stalling the proclamation of the 12th winner, the correct thing for GO to do was file a protest at the Senate Electoral Tribunal should Pimentel III lose to Zubiri.

Witness scared

Allegations of fraud made Maguindanao elections controversial, but witnesses were too afraid to come out in the open to testify.

Musa Dimasidsing, schools district supervisor of Maguindanao who helped expose alleged fraud in the province's elections, was shot dead on June 9 in Pikit, North Cotabato, days after instances of vote manufacturing and rigging were reported.

Bedol's statements didn't help Maguindanao rid its image as a center of fraud in the recent elections.

During the national canvassing, Bedol told the NBC that Faizal Kalantungan, the opposition's witness who revealed that ERs from several villages in Pagalungan were still uncanvassed, was not a BEI from the town.

190 ERs uncanvassed

But militant party-list gorup Bayan Muna showed a certification from Dimasidsing stating that Kalantungan was a BEI in Pagalungan.

Kalantungan executed an affidavit reporting that some 190 ERs in Pagalungan were uncanvassed.

A group once allied with President Macapagal Arroyo, the Caucus of Development NGO Networks (Code-NGO), joined the GO's demand to discard the Maguindanao results.

"The threats and violence that prevail in Maguindanao are real," said the group in a statement.

With a report from Jerome Aning

Proclaim us, party-list reps urge ...

From page A1

who joined the appeal aired at a press conference in Manila were Rodante Marcoleta of Alagad, Louie Corral and Edgardo Valdez of the Association of Philippine Electric Cooperatives (Apec), and Guillermo Cua of the Cooperative-Natcco Network Party (Coop-Natcco).

All five were their respective party-list groups' nominees in the May 14 midterm elections.

The Party-list Caucus is made up of 12 "long-standing, mainstream party-list organizations that have invested in the economic lives of the people," Corral said.

According to Chavez and company, the controversy over the 12th and last winning senatorial candidate has overshadowed the fact that there is no party-list representation yet in the 14th Congress.

They said a partial proclamation would mean the proclamation of the first nominees of the party-list groups that had made the cut, without prejudice to the additional seats to which each group would be entitled once all party-list votes had been canvassed.

340,000 votes

Chavez and company said those party-list groups with some 340,000 votes in the May elections should be proclaimed by the Comelec because they had reached the 2-percent threshold with more than 16 million votes canvassed.

Per the Comelec's latest official tally on June 29, Apec had 510,870 votes; Alagad, 422,052; Butil, 404,940; and Coop-Natcco, 360,155.

"The Panganiban doctrine will only apply to the additional seats," Corral said.

He said it was also clear that it was this formula, devised by then Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban, that the Comelec should use, and not the 2-4-6 formula (one seat for each group that has reached 2 percent, 2 seats for 4 percent, and 3 seats for 6 percent).

Marcoleta said that even if he himself considered the Panganiban formula "a mathematical absurdity," there was no choice but to apply it lest the Supreme Court again cite the Comelec for contempt.

The five representatives said "the solution" to the controversies raised in the May 14 elections, such as the party-list formula, would be to amend the Party-list Law.

Once they are proclaimed, they said, they would propose amendments to the law, including ensuring that all party-list seats would be filled up in accordance with what the Constitution provides—that party-list representatives should take 20 percent of all House seats.

Noon of June 30

Cua noted that the first nominees of the party-list groups that had reached the 2-percent threshold "should have started being party-list representatives in the 14th Congress at noon of June 30."

Valdez said that if the Comelec was concerned over the possible disenfranchisement of 200,000 voters in Maguindanao in connection with the heated battle for the 12th senatorial slot, it should consider that by not proclaiming the party-list winners, it was disenfranchising millions of Filipinos who had voted for party-list groups.

Chavez and company said that while district representatives of the 14th Congress had begun working, party-list representatives had been prevented from doing their job.

The party-list groups in the past Congress "no longer have a legal personality" with the Comelec's failure to make even a partial proclamation, Marcoleta pointed out.

Chavez and company said party-list representatives could not file or refile bills for their sectors, jockey for committee chairmanships, or even take part in the discussions in the race for the House speakership.

Voting for speakership

"This bloc will constitute some 12 votes in the battle for the speakership, and that's a significant number that can tip the balance," Corral said of the Party-list Caucus.

The marginalized sectors will effectively be disenfranchised in the speakership fight if the Comelec does not proclaim the winning party-list groups by July 23, the day the voting for the speakership is scheduled, Chavez and company said.

IN THE KNOW

What's keeping Comelec from proclaiming winners

UNCOUNTED ELECTION RESULTS from Pantar, Lanao del Norte and Bogo, Cebu are keeping the Commission on Elections from proclaiming party-list representatives, according to the Comelec.

According to Republic Act No. 7941, or the Party-list System Act, the Comelec must tally all votes cast for party-list groups nationwide then rank these groups according to the number of votes they received.

Party-list groups that receive at least 2 percent of the total number of votes cast for the party-list elections are considered winners.

The law said the number of seats in the House of Representatives, that winning party-list groups were entitled to, will be determined by how many percent of the total number of votes the winners received.

Panganiban Formula

But early last month, Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos changed the rules of the game.

He said the Comelec would start using the so-called Panganiban Formula (a Supreme Court ruling penned by ex-Justice Artemio Panganiban) in determining the number of House seats that each winning party-list group was entitled to.

The Comelec, in previous elections, used a 2-4-6 Formula which gave winning party-list groups one seat for every 2 percent of votes. Under this, a winning party-list group with 2 percent of votes was entitled to one House seat; those with 4 percent, two seats; and those with 6 percent, three seats.

Abalos cited a Supreme Court ruling that described the 2-4-6 Formula as "simplified."

Under the formula adopted by the Comelec from the high court ruling, a winning party-list group would be entitled to additional seats based on the number of votes received by the party-list group with the most votes.

The number of additional seats that a winning party-list group could get will be determined by dividing the number of its votes with the number of votes of the No. 1 party-list group and then multiplying this with the number of seats that the No. 1 party-list group was entitled to.

Complicated? Some party-list groups accused the Comelec of intentionally making it so. *Inquirer Research*

NBI arrests exec in Internet scam; other suspects named

From page A1

ation in Baguio City.

Castillo, who by himself has allegedly defrauded investors of about P200 to P300 million, was charged with syndicated estafa at the Department of Justice.

The NBI has launched a manhunt for the other suspects who remain at large. They were identified as Jaime "Jimpol" Poliquit, of Davao City; Edwin Sendana, of Pasig City; Edwin Ricalde, of Pampanga; Chris Erabon, of Baguio City; Garry Espiritu and one alias Jomarc.

Foreign suspects

The NBI said they are also coordinating with their counterparts in other countries for the arrest of suspects Roger Smith, a US national, who heads FS Investment in the Asia-Pacific region; and Raymond Chua and Bensy Fong, both Singaporean nationals.

Investigation showed that Castillo was arrested following complaints filed by Frederico Olarte, Glen Manuel Sunga and Philip Fernando, who all claimed they fell victims to the scam.

The NBI urged other victims of the "Francswiss" scam to come out and lodge a complaint against the suspects.

Ponzi schemes are a type of illegal pyramid scheme named for Charles Ponzi, who duped thousands of New England residents into investing in a postage stamp speculation scheme back in the 1920s.

The scheme, which lures investors with abnormally high rates of return in just a short period of time, works on the "rob-Peter-to-pay-Paul" principle, as money from new investors is used to pay off earlier investors until the whole scheme collapses.

The new scam lures unsuspecting victims over the Internet using the website http://www.francswiss.biz and http://deutchfrancs.com.

Double your money

Prospective investors are asked to invest $1,000 in francswiss.biz and $10,000 in deutchfrancs.com with a promise to double their money in 22 days.

"This group promises interests bigger than those offered by banks," said NBI-NCR director Ruel Lasala. "This type of investment scheme usually collapses as fast as they are created while investors are left unable to recover their investments."

The victims told the NBI that they were surfing through the Internet when they read the advertisement of FS Investment that a $1,000 investment would earn a daily interest of 4.5 percent or $45 which could be encashed through Internet-to-bank transactions.

'E-points'

The FS Investment website also promised that their investments would also earn 10 percent, also called "e-points," if they would recruit other investors, they added.

The victims said they called up the number posted on the website. They were subsequently invited to a meeting by Castillo who introduced them to the other "financial advisers."

Each of them invested $1,000 but claimed that they received no receipt or acknowledgement from Castillo.

Of the three, only Olarte received a "trading account" online, an indication that he was already a registered Francswiss investor.

When Sunga and Fernando failed to receive the online confirmation of their registration, they tried to refund their investments but the suspect allegedly gave them excuses and even denied receiving money from them.

This prompted them to file a complaint with the NBI.

'Downlines'

Olarte, on the other hand, said he checked his investment portfolio at FS Investment website everyday and was initially happy that he was earning interest daily. However, he failed to encash the interests earned when he went to the bank as these were not reflected in his bank account.

When he confronted Castillo about it, Olarte was told that he could only withdraw his interest if he would recruit a minimum of two investors or the "downlines" required or if he would invest an additional $1,000.

Olarte said he tried to borrow money from his relatives who informed him that FS Investment was a pyramiding syndicate after news about the scam was flashed on television.

The victim then sought the help of the NBI which immediately formed a team for an entrapment operation.

Castillo was arrested as soon as the suspect received the marked money from the victim. The suspect is now detained at the NBI jail.

BSP warning

BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. yesterday warned the public to be careful in choosing where to invest their money.

"Those who market financial investments under the Ponzi scheme are offering fantastic returns, so we are warning the public," he said.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas advised the Anti-Money Laundering Council to include in its watchlist financial transactions that are suspected to fall under the so-called "Ponzi scheme."

Tetangco said the AMLC had been alerted of this investment fraud following reports received by the BSP that people involved in the Ponzi scheme were trying to stretch its reach among potential Filipino clients.

The AMLC is the body tasked to track down money-laundering activities, and does so partly by requiring banks and other financial institutions to report financial transactions involving huge sums of money, which are suspected to have come from illegal activities.

Under the Anti-Money Laundering Act of 2001, which was also the basis for the establishment of the AMLC, any transaction involving a movement of funds of over P500,000 within one banking day should automatically be reported to the AMLC for monitoring.

Blacklist

The BSP chief said any individual invited to make an investment should be cautious if the offer promises returns that are much higher than what usual investment activities provide.

Earlier the Securities and Exchange Commission made a similar warning to the public against five Internet-based firms allegedly engaged in Ponzi schemes. The SEC said these firms usually invite possible clients to invest in foreign currencies, and then disappear once they get the money.

These firms include Francswiss, Swiss Cash, Universal Forex System, Global America and Private Forex Trade Inc.

The SEC said these firms have no permit nor authority to solicit investments and are therefore operating illegally.

The SEC urged the public to report to the SEC any investment offer made by representatives of these firms or other firms suspected to be operating a Ponzi scheme.

Noli hails SC ruling on seniors' discount

VICE PRESIDENT NOLI DE CASTRO, PRINCIpal sponsor and author of the Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2003 (RA 9257) during his stint in the Senate, lauded yesterday the Supreme Court decision upholding the 20-percent discount given to senior citizens on their purchases of medicines.

The decision, De Castro said in a press statement, was an affirmation of State's concern for the welfare of the senior citizens.

The Supreme Court has dismissed a petition questioning the constitutionality of RA 9257, which gives senior citizens 20 percent discount on their purchases of medicines and payments for certain services.

A number of drugstore owners had asked for the nullification of the 20-percent discount provision because it would cause them financial losses. However, the high court said there was "no proof that the law had been arbitrarily issued and would oppress their business operations."

De Castro had asked Mercury Drug Corp., the leading drugstore chain in the country, to accept credit card payments from the public following complaints from senior citizens that credit cards were not being accepted for purchases by senior citizens claiming the discount. De Castro said Mercury had acceded to the request.

De Castro said that other drug retailers should follow Mercury Drug's lead.

DE CASTRO

"We should all work for the rights and interests of our senior citizens, in recognition of their valuable contribution to society," he said.

De Castro also said that he would support moves to amend value added tax (VAT) law exempting the medicine purchases of senior citizens from the 12-percent VAT so they could fully enjoy the benefits of the senior citizen's discount.

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Shangri-La waiters affirm Abalos story

By DJ Yap and Julie M. Aurelio

IF INDEED COMMISSION ON Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos "broke bread" with the Zubiris at the Shang Palace in Makati Shangri-La Hotel last weekend, no one at the Cantonese restaurant is telling. By order of management, they said.

But if two of the staff who spoke to the INQUIRER despite the order are to be believed, no such dinner took place, and Abalos left the restaurant seconds after greeting the Zubiris.

Which means Abalos could have been telling the truth.

A food server who was present at the Friday dinner, where Miguel Zubiri's parents, Vicky and Jose, were celebrating their anniversary, confirmed that Abalos had met briefly with the Zubiris in one of the function rooms they had reserved for the night.

The waiter said Abalos only said "Hi" to the group and left soon after.

It's their affair

He would not give more details, like who Abalos' companion was, saying all inquiries into the matter were to be referred to the hotel's communication department, on management orders.

Reached for comment, the hotel's communication director, Joy Wassmer, said they were not "privileged to give information about who was here, or who dined here."

"Chairman Abalos has already spoken about it. It cannot come from the hotel. Whatever the parties said, let's leave it at that. It's their affair. It's best to leave the hotel out of it," she said.

Controversy erupted last week after Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. accused Abalos of impropriety after he was supposedly seen "breaking bread" with the Zubiris, a charge the election official dismissed as baseless.

Pimentel's son, Aquilino "Koko" Pimentel III, is in a tight race for the 12th senatorial slot with Miguel Zubiri, who recently overtook him through the votes from the contested certificates of canvass from Maguindanao.

An attendant in the restroom, which is located outside the restaurant, said he had seen the Zubiris and Abalos enter the restaurant, but that they came separately.

Smaller function room

He did not recall seeing Abalos leave, but he said he heard from the other staff that the official immediately left without having dinner.

"I don't think they ate together. Besides, it would be stupid since it's a public place. To think the winner of the 12th slot has not even been declared," he said.

One of the food servers the INQUIRER talked to said the Zubiris had their dinner in one of the private function rooms in the restaurant.

The biggest function room, which can accommodate 60 people, can be reserved for up to P100,000. More intimate ones that can sit 16 people cost P18,000, one of the restaurant attendants said.

The Zubiris reportedly used the smaller function room.

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Saturday, July 7, 2007
13th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Gen 27:1-5, 15-29
Gospel: Matthew 9:14-17

The disciples of John came to him with the question, "How is it that we and the Pharisees fast on many occasions, but not your disciples?"

Jesus answered them, "How can you expect wedding guests to mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? Time will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, then they will fast.

"No one patches an old coat with a piece of unshrunken cloth, for the patch will shrink and tear an even bigger hole in the coat. Besides you don't put new wine in old wineskins. If you do, the wineskins will burst and the wine be spilt. No, you put new wine in fresh skins; then both are preserved."

Commentary

Isaac is old and can't see. He tells his firstborn Esau to go hunting for him and bring him something and in return he will give him a blessing. Rebekah, whose favorite is Jacob, plots to have him go to his aged father and pass himself off as his older brother and so get the firstborn's birthright and blessing. (Our ancestors are a fine lot—no better than what you would find in soap operas). Jacob does pull it off, though one suspects that Isaac knew the deception, and it is Jacob who goes off with the blessing/promise given to Isaac and Abraham before him.

Jesus is caught in the throes of teaching his disciples while the Pharisees keep questioning what he does and says—why not fast like John's disciples? They have no idea who Jesus is and that while his presence is in the world, why would anyone fast? Jesus is a new thing, unimagined, and his presence/person is so strong that it will pull on the old and stretch it out of shape. We have to be made new to be able to absorb Jesus' words and life.

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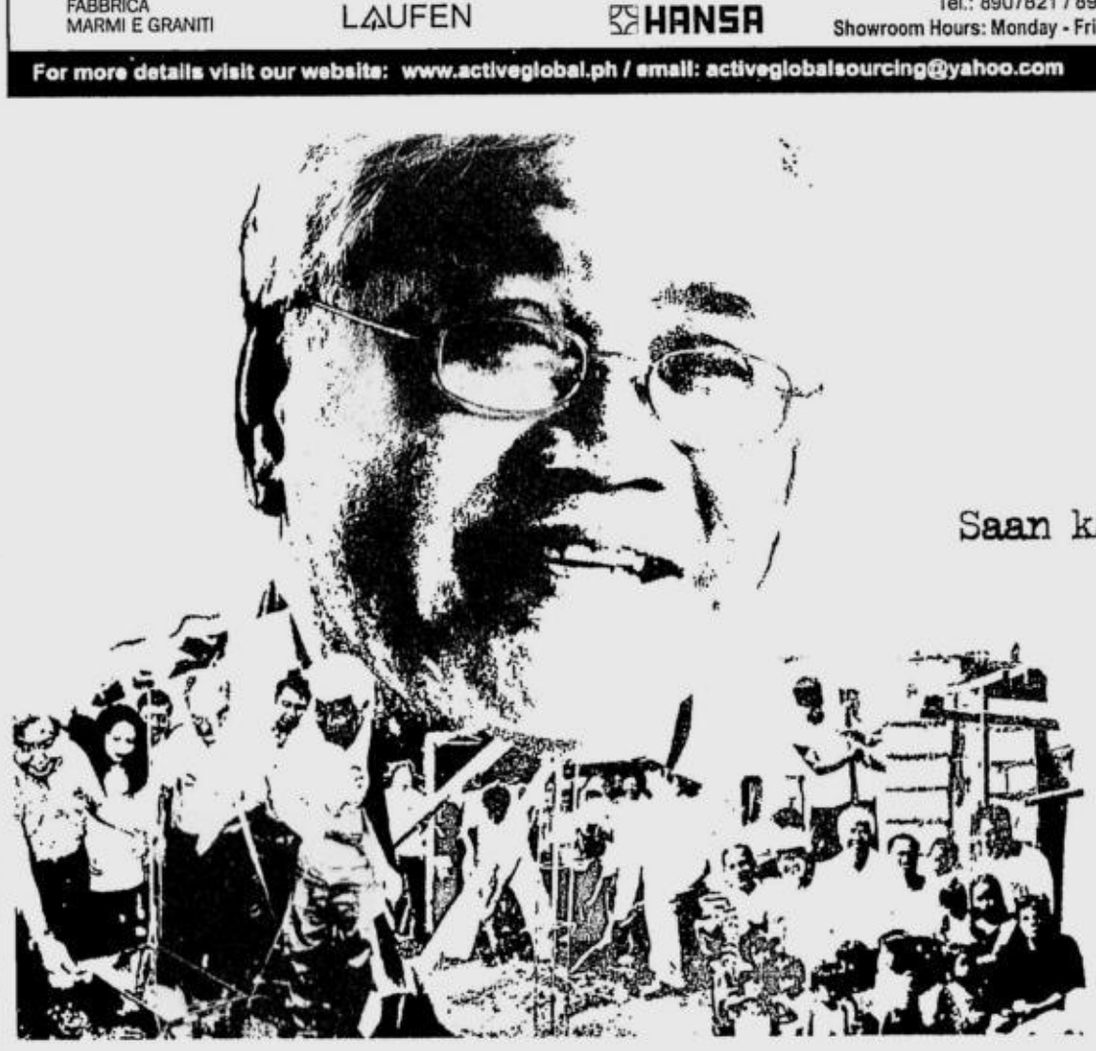

Saan ka ba nakatira?
– Tony Meloto, Gawad Kalinga

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Antiterror law has many safeguards, says usec

By Christine O. Avendaño

THE HUMAN SECURITY ACT (HSA) OF 2007, also referred to as the antiterror law, contains enough safeguards against possible abuse by law enforcers.

Defense Undersecretary Ricardo Blancaflor stressed this at a forum held yesterday at the Ambassador Hotel in Manila.

Blancaflor, who is also spokesperson for the Anti-Terror Task Force, made the remarks to brush aside apprehensions regarding the law's implementation.

The HSA takes effect on July 15.

Blancaflor said the HSA can be considered the only law in the country with so much punitive provisions against government law enforcers who abuse it.

"Not even the Revised Penal Code have that punitive provisions against government enforcers," he said.

He explained that those critical of the law were those who did not read it.

Many 'firsts'

He also noted the many "firsts" in the law, including the provision that "strictly" prohibits torture. He also cited 62 other provisions that deal with human rights.

It was also the first time that a law was required to be published in the newspapers, television and radio for one week, Blancaflor said.

More importantly, Blancaflor noted that there were 22 provisions in the law imposing penalties for government enforcers who abuse this law.

On the question that the law was a watered down version of the original proposed law, Blancaflor conceded that while this was "not exactly the ideal version," it was something that the government "can work with to fight terrorism."

He noted that the country ranks second to the United States in the number of fatalities from terrorist attacks.

He said that since the LRT bombing in December 2000, there were 338 Filipinos who were killed by terrorists.

And for the first time, Blancaflor said the country has a law that can stop terrorists from pushing ahead with their terror plots.

"In this country, conspiracy to commit murder is not a crime. If 10 Pinoys plan to bomb an airplane and finally decide to do it, we cannot stop them. *Bakit*? Because conspiracy to commit terror is not a crime. But with this law, we can finally stop them. In the past we can only run after the suspects after a bomb had exploded. Now we have the right to even stop them beforehand. That is even more important," he said.

Palace welcomes $30-M US aid

Proposed funding a boost to campaign vs extrajudicial slays–Bunye

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

MALACAÑANG YESTERDAY WELcomed the $30 million foreign military funding proposed by the US Congress as a major boost to its ongoing efforts to address the issue of politically motivated killings in the country.

"We assure the members of US Congress that the Philippine Government acknowledges their concern and see this as a sincere desire to help us address the issue," said Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye in a statement.

The Philippines will get $30 million in appropriations from the US 2008 Foreign Military Funding bill or nearly three times the $11.1 million proposed by the US Executive branch despite attempts by Philippine cause-oriented groups to lobby against this funding.

The Philippines is also getting a boost in the Economic Support Fund from $26 million to $30 million.

"We are thankful to our friends in both Houses of the US Congress and in the Executive branch for their faith in the government of the Philippines as demonstrated in the strong military funding currently appropriated to the Philippines," said Bunye.

Additional $2 million

Bunye said the bill carried a provision that would grant the Philippines an additional $2 million subject to the confirmation of the State Department if "we are implementing the recommendations of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial Summary or Arbitrary Executions which we have largely done and that the Philippine military is not engaging in acts of intimidation or violence against members of legal, civic and religious organizations who advocate human rights."

The Arroyo administration has been criticized for its atrocious human rights record which local and foreign human rights groups claimed was worse than in martial law under Ferdinand Marcos.

"US funding has been crucial to the many successes that the Philippines has achieved against terrorism. This is funding that has been central to uprooting terrorism by bringing in basic infrastructure, healthcare, education to affected areas," said Bunye.

BUNYE

4 Cebu judges suspended for making 'mockery' of marriage rites

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE SUPREME COURT HAS PLACED FOUR Cebu City judges under suspension while being investigated for allegedly conducting marriages under irregular circumstances, thus "making a mockery of the sanctity of marriage."

Chief Justice Reynato Puno also directed the filing of administrative charges against the four judges for corruption, dishonesty, gross ignorance of the law and deliberate violation of the law on marriage.

The charges were filed against Municipal Trial Court in Cities Judges Anatalio Necesario, Gil Acosta, Rosabella Tormis and Edgemelo Rosales, who were also suspended until the charges against them are resolved.

Puno ordered an investigation into the activities of the judges after being informed of the allegations against them by members of the religious and business community, diplomatic corps and cause-oriented groups during a trip to Cebu.

He said a judicial audit team found discrepancies and irregularities in the records.

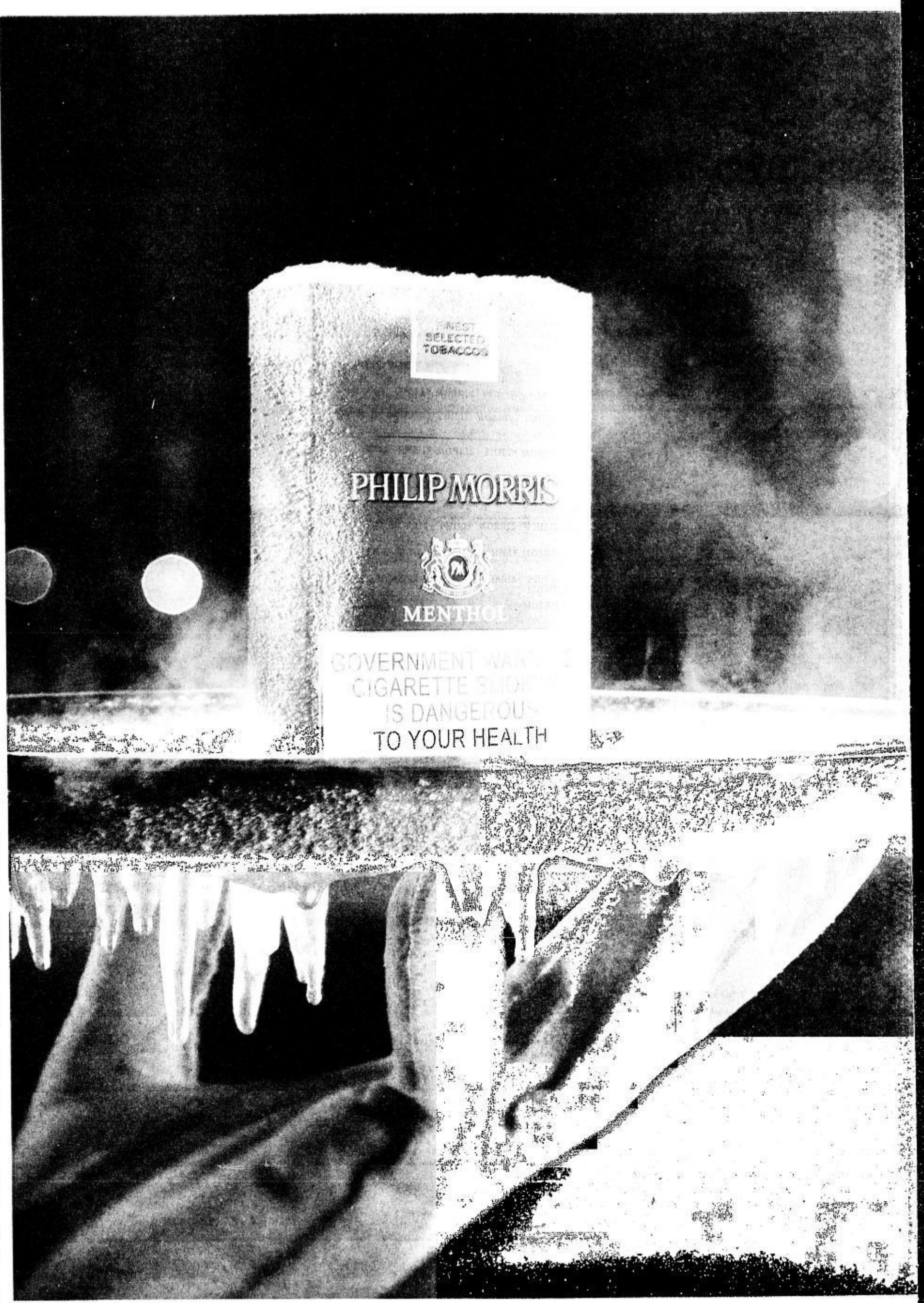
"Undeniably, Judges Necesario, Acosta, Rosales, and Tormis abused their authority to solemnize marriage, thereby making a mockery of the sanctity of marriage," the investigation report stated.

The team found that the figures from the office of the judges showed that they solemnized more marriages than the number of marriage certificates they issued.

It also learned that there were marriages solemnized without the necessary documents like marriage licenses, certificates of legal capacity or joint affidavits or cohabitation. There were also couples who were married without proof of payment of the required solemnization fee.

Several marriage licenses were obtained from civil registrars in areas where the parties did not live, the team said. It also saw discrepancies in the signatures of the local civil registrars of Barili and Liloan in Cebu in the marriage licenses. These discrepancies indicate that the signatures could have been forged, it added.

The Supreme Court said two individuals executed affidavits confirming these findings and added that the package fees for the solemnization of marriage can go from P1,500 to P15,000.



Government Warnin
is dangerous

BACK TO MENDIOLA. Policemen and militant students clash during a rally near Mendiola Bridge in the first protest held at the site since Mayor Alfredo Lim lifted the no-rally policy in the area.

RESTING ON HIS TRUNCHEONS, an antiriot policeman takes a breather during a rally near Mediola yesterday.

PSG won't let rallies come near Palace

NEWLY ELECTED MANILA MAYOR ALFREDO Lim may have lifted the ban on rallies at Mendiola but the Presidential Security Group would not allow protesters it deems a threat to the security of the President to go near Malacañang, specifically Mendiola Bridge.

"What we only want is protect the seat of power, the whole Malacañang premises. It depends on the situation, I hope the local government will understand our privilege to protect the seat of power," said PSG Chief Col. Romeo Prestoza.

Prestoza said he would insist on having a say on what mass protests would be allowed to be held on Mendiola Bridge and to determine whether organizers and participants were a threat to the security of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"We must first talk if we see any threat in a particular rally. It's not right to let them come near Malacañang that easy," he insisted.

Prestoza said that Lim should first verify, in coordination with PSG, to determine whether the applicants for a rally permit were a threat to the President.

Prestoza was reacting to reports that Lim would allow activists to hold their rallies at Mendiola, specifically on weekends, as long as they obtain a permit and keep their mass demonstrations peaceful and orderly.

Lim had made it one of his campaign promises to lift the rally ban imposed by his predecessor Mayor Lito Atienza, a staunch ally of the Palace.

Atienza imposed the no-rally zones last year when public outcry mounted against the President's alleged cheating in the 2004 elections and corruption scandals.

Prestoza said the PSG was willing to open coordination discussions with Lim. "I might send one of my men to coordinate with the office of Mayor Lim to discuss about the limitations ad to verify these orders. It just might be all talk and nothing is on paper. If their proposal is acceptable, why not?" said Prestoza.

Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

Malaysian held for 'trafficking' of Pinays to KL

By Jerome Aning

THE BUREAU OF IMMIGRATION yesterday announced the arrest of a suspected Malaysian human trafficker and illegal recruiter caught in the act of escorting nine Filipino women he allegedly recruited to work as bar girls in Malaysian nightclubs.

Ku Chee Chen, 34, was arrested Thursday morning by members of the BI's fugitive search unit at the Diosdado Macapagal (formerly Clark) International Airport in Pampanga.

The suspect was accompanying nine women aboard an Air Asia flight to Kuala Lumpur when caught. He is currently held at the BI detention center and will face deportation proceedings.

BI intelligence chief Faizal Hussin said Chen has been the object of a manhunt and surveillance since his office was tipped about the Malaysian's activities based on the complaints of his other alleged victims.

Immigration Commissioner Marcelino Libanan said Chen would be deported, later blacklisted and banned from reentering the country for being an undesirable alien.

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OPINION

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Caught in contradictions

EDITORIAL

DEPOSED PRESIDENT JOSEPH ESTRADA'S SON, Sen. Jinggoy Estrada, and their political allies must have been very pleased with what former Vice President Teofisto Guingona had to say. They ceded to him the place of honor at the center of the table during the press conference they called Thursday to discuss the latest developments on Estrada's plunder trial. And they had very good reasons to be happy.

It was Guingona who rose in the Senate in October 2000 to accuse Estrada of graft and corruption, betrayal of public trust, and violation of his oath of office. He said he had evidence to prove Estrada had accepted P220 million in payoffs from *jueteng* and pocketed P70 million from the excise tax on tobacco, and he urged the Senate to investigate the charges first made by then Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson. The privilege speech led to Estrada's impeachment trial and, subsequently, to the people power revolt that ousted Estrada from the presidency.

Last Thursday, Guingona was singing a different tune. Estrada, he said, is now "a man who has found a new light and a new life . . . he has new values and he is a new man." Pointing out that Estrada "has been down for more than six years," Guingona went on to propose that he be set free. "I say, let us give justice now to Erap that he is down," he said. "I hope the court will acquit him. Let freedom be for Erap."

However, Guingona appeared to have gotten carried away by his rhetoric to notice that he was getting caught in his own contradictions. Firstly, he never acknowledged that he had erred or had been guilty of making false accusations in that privilege speech. So what was his basis for calling for the disgraced former president's acquittal? Because Estrada is "down"? No one gets high after being haled to court for any crime, but this is the first time anyone has suggested that being "down" is a ground for acquittal, especially on charges as serious as plunder.

Secondly, Guingona described Estrada as a "new man" who subscribes to "new values" and is now leading a "new life." So what was wrong with the old man and his old life and values? Why did Estrada need to change and to be renewed and reformed? Guingona again may not have realized it, but when he talked this way, the implication was that there was something wrong, depraved or contemptible about the old Estrada and his old lifestyle. Could it be that Guingona remains convinced Estrada is guilty of the crimes he charged him with?

Thirdly, Guingona, like the Estrada loyalists, equates justice with freedom for the former president. Can he not see justice being served with a decision to convict? Can he not give the Sandiganbayan and the justices hearing the case at least the benefit of the doubt? Is it too difficult for him to see them arriving at a guilty verdict based solely on their appreciation of the evidence and the testimony of witnesses? Or has he joined the chorus led by Estrada himself which claims that any verdict other than "not guilty" could only be the product of manipulation by the powers-that-be?

Like the Left which now claims disinterest in seeing Estrada punished, Guingona seems to have lost his capacity for outrage over the excesses and abuses Estrada stands accused of committing while in office. The result is a distorted sense of justice and a propensity to cast doubts on the integrity and independence of the judicial process without reason or cause.

Misrepresentation

FOREIGN COMMENT

WHEN PRESIDENT BUSH FELT THE NEED TO GIVE A speech on Iraq, his handlers arranged a gig at the Naval War College in Rhode Island.

But reporters traveling with the President noted that this military gathering, while respectful, didn't seem enthusiastic. Maybe that's because people in the military dislike lies as much as civilians do.

When Mr. Bush said that al-Qaida is "the main enemy" in Iraq, he surely knew that his top intelligence analysts have said that's not true. They have said the conflict between Sunnis and Shiites is the main cause of violence.

Certainly, al-Qaida is a problem in Iraq. But it isn't the biggest problem, and it isn't the key to achieving stability. Americans count on their presidents to understand, not misrepresent, the big picture.

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The meaning of freedom

SEPARATE OPINION

Isagani A. Cruz

THE MINOR REMEMBRANCE IF NOT CELEbration of July 4 last Wednesday as our former Independence Day reminded me of an incident that to me emphasized the true meaning of freedom.

It happened many years ago, during the days following the end of the Japanese Occupation, when I was still a young man pursuing my studies in the University of the Philippines then situated in Padre Faura, Manila.

The city was then bustling with newcomers from the provinces, including far-off Mindanao and the Visayas, who had come to enjoy the lights of Manila, and had decided to stay in the already crowded metropolis.

Traffic had visibly and intolerably increased, especially with the entry of the new-fangled "jeepney" that had replaced the old calesa and unseated the "cochero" as the king of the road. Particularly congested was Quezon Boulevard in Quiapo, where the religious crowded the church of the Black Nazarene and Plaza Miranda was soon to become the forum of the nation.

Since it linked the people from the south of Manila, especially Sampaloc and Santa Mesa, and the suburbs in San Juan, Mandaluyong and Marikina to the business section in the Escolta and the Chinese stores in Binondo, the crossing point between the two sections in R. Hidalgo was congested during the early morning hours.

The municipal board of Manila had not yet authorized the construction of a wooden overpass where the people could avoid the busy vehicular traffic below (although they ran the risk of panhandlers and even hold-uppers waiting for them at night). Lacking that dubious convenience, the walking public had to wait many long and anxious minutes before they could cross the street on signal—and permission—of the traffic policeman on duty.

On that fidgety morning I remember, I was among the hundreds of pedestrians waiting for the signal for us to cross the street after temporarily stopping the also hurrying vehicles to their likewise urgent destinations. It was almost 8 o'clock and many office workers were desperately waiting to beat the Bundy clock and being deducted for tardiness. Yet, although there was quiet muttering among us, we respected, although grudgingly, the authority of the traffic policeman.

Suddenly and unexpectedly, two burly American soldiers, in GI uniforms and with their rifles carelessly slung on their shoulders, appeared. Ignoring the scores of pedestrians waiting for the signal to cross the street, they nonchalantly started to do so on their own, in defiance of the policeman on his beat and the vehicles that had still the right of way.

We were all startled and waited to see what would happen. And we did not have long to do so because the traffic policeman reacted immediately. As the vehicles stopped to give way to the American soldiers, he blew his whistle and walked toward the soldiers, who had stopped on their tracks. They looked with poker faces at the angry policeman, probably wondering what was happening. After all, they must have thought, they were American GIs who had just "liberated" the country.

The irate policeman with all the authority at his command stared down the two soldiers and ordered them to stop. He told them to go back, not arrogantly but respectfully, and told them they had to wait like the other pedestrians until he gave them permission to cross. He was a foot shorter than the two Americans, but it was clear that he was the one giving the orders.

The two soldiers obeyed. They stepped back and joined the rest of the people waiting to cross the street on signal from the traffic policeman. He was acting on the authority of the law for the maintenance of order in the crowded street. Without him, that portion of Quezon Boulevard would have been awash in turmoil between passengers and vehicles and most likely in accidents and even bloodshed.

The soldiers were probably veterans in some lethal battlefield and had stared death in the face against their deadly enemies. But they had the goodwill, and the intelligence, to acknowledge the authority of the humble but respectful policeman who had blown his whistle and asked them to step back with the other pedestrians waiting for his signal to cross.

It struck me then that another minion of the law might have been daunted by the two hefty and armed American soldiers who had come to our country to help us drive away the Japanese occupants from our territory. He must have thought that we owed them a tremendous debt of gratitude and so should be allowed this small courtesy to cross while the rest of his countrymen patiently waited.

But our traffic policeman did not think so. He had the courage to enforce his authority on all the people waiting to cross Quezon Boulevard to reach wherever they were going on time. All meant everybody, including armed and battle-tested American soldiers. Fortunately, the soldiers themselves understood that Filipino policeman's authority and obediently stepped back at his command, or if you like, request. The important thing is that, to his credit and also of the two soldiers, he was obeyed.

I remembered that incident last July 4 and the simple lesson it taught that freedom, to be meaningful, must be asserted.

Who's against letting the rule of law prevail?

GET REAL

Solita Collas-Monsod

I SAW THAT "LET THE RULE OF LAW PREvail" ad in the newspapers on Wednesday, and I didn't think there was anything ominous about it. In fact, the message seemed eminently reasonable: let us keep our cool, whatever the decision of the Sandiganbayan on the Erap plunder case, and whatever we think of his guilt or innocence. The last thing this country needs is another set of rallies and marches that may scare the bejabbers out of prospective foreign direct investors (those who are here know the score, although some aren't above pretending to be upset, hoping to get more concessions from the government), and definitely tie up traffic and generally hurt businesses for the day.

And who could possibly object to letting the rule of law prevail? We are all sick and tired of people who consider themselves above the law—whether they are at the top or at the bottom (even policemen look the other way when other policemen abuse their authority) of the power totem pole—and who expect (and, alas, receive!) special treatment. We know that leads to more abuses of power. And given our collective experience with "special" treatment granted to the economically or politically powerful, a reminder about the rule of law—as well as the need for calm—should, I thought anyway, be welcome.

Come to think of it, given precisely that more often than not we allow the rich and powerful to get away with figurative murder, it would be more reasonable to think that the ad about respecting the rule of law was more likely addressed to those who think Erap is guilty but will be acquitted, advising them to stay cool.

But judging from the virulent reaction of the Erap partisans, that's not how the ad hit them. Which is what is so perplexing. Because I can't figure out what their basis is for saying that the ad is a Malacañang ploy to "condition" the public mind to an Erap conviction. I went over the 142-word message (including title) four or five times, in case I missed anything the first couple of times, but still no warning flags went up.

Maybe, if we go sentence by sentence, something will come up.

"Erap: Guilty or not guilty. *Kailangan bang may gulo*?" All the words had the same font. The word "guilty" wasn't any more emphasized than the rest. So that's out. But wait! The word "gulo" could be the key to a whole series of word associations and hidden implications. Perhaps the Erap partisans associate themselves with "gulo" (they have, after all, been behind a lot of the "gulo," wouldn't you say?) and therefore feel that they are the ones being addressed. Once that premise is accepted, one can go to town with the line of thinking along the following: "gulo" is associated with Erap's group. Therefore, if the ad is afraid of "gulo," it must mean that whoever took out that ad must know that the Sandiganbayan decision will go against Erap. And that kind of foreknowledge must in turn mean a close link with the Sandiganbayan judges, which must then mean that Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo is involved. And since GMA is involved, well, then it must also follow that she influenced the justices—to convict Erap, no less. Why? Because she is a vindictive person, and wants Erap to suffer for making her suffer (or something to that effect—just listen to Erap).

That has to be about the longest stretch of logic one can meet up with—starting from the word "gulo" all the way to GMA telling the justices to find Erap guilty. And on this basis, we have the opposition coming out full blast with a press conference attended to by—well, we all saw the pictures. Erap the victim, Gloria the villain.

Can we do a little reflection here, please?

Is the premise that "gulo" is a phenomenon associated solely with the Erap group a reasonable one? Wasn't Erap's present predicament the result of a "gulo" that was started by those opposing him (with Tito Guingona, and subsequently Manny Villar at the forefront), and ended with his "constructive resignation"? If only Erap's group can create "gulo," does this mean that the Edsa II participants, who ran the gamut from left to right, are now either convinced that they have "done him wrong" or are too old and too tired to demonstrate again? Doesn't that sound farfetched?

But once we accept the possibility that "gulo" can be created by Erap opponents as well as partisans, the line of the logic is broken—and we are left with an ad that, dare I say, sounds extremely reasonable, and with no hidden agenda.

So let us for the nonce accept the initial premise of a one-sided "gulo," and look at what follows: that (a) the President calls the shots over the Sandiganbayan justices and (b) that she wants Erap convicted.

With respect to (a), I have no idea whether GMA appointed the justices sitting on the Erap case; but if her experience with the Supreme Court (the majority of whom are her appointees) is any indication, there is no basis for saying that she can dictate to the Sandiganbayan justices.

With respect to (b), it just doesn't make sense for GMA to want him convicted, and then try to avoid "gulo" with an ad campaign, for heaven's sake. If she doesn't want "gulo," why stick her hand in toward a conviction? Wouldn't it be more logical for her to stick her hand in toward an acquittal?

While GMA can be accused of many things, I don't think anybody has ever accused her of having a soft, warm head (as opposed to a cool, hard one)—except perhaps where her husband is concerned.

Let's leave Erap's fate to the courts

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

AS THE DAY THE SANDIGANBAYAN IS EXPECTED to rule on the fate of deposed President Joseph Estrada approaches, emotions are running high once again. The opposition argues that he should now be set free; he has suffered enough in six years of detention. But pro-administration people say that the matter should be left to the courts. And whatever the decision will be, we should all accept it, calmly.

I fully sympathize with the plight of the former president, but I agree with the latter group.

* * *

There are those who, fearing that the Sandiganbayan is under the thumb of Malacañang, seek to destroy the court's credibility this early. They say there will be a conviction, and Estrada himself has expressed such fear. But in fairness to the Sandiganbayan, I think it has not given any indication that it can be dictated upon by the Palace; on the contrary, I think the justices who handled the case have been fairly independent-minded (and overly patient with Estrada's lawyers who resorted to a full bag of tricks to delay its closure—while awaiting a new regime). Then, too, the six-year long trial has been fully transparent, and both sides were able to exhaust all arguments. The canard about the graft court being under the Palace's influence is being spread by those who fear a conviction.

On the matter of the full-page ads titled, "Erap, Guilty or Not Guilty? Kailangan Bang May Gulo?" which appeared in major newspapers the other day, Palace supporters are suspected to be behind them. Assuming it's true, I see nothing wrong with it. I think the ads merely seek to calm down passions and remind people that the decision should be accepted by all. The times call for sobriety and reason, not a reign of passion, which the opposition seems to be instigating this early.

* * *

Reports say the Sandiganbayan's Third Division will hand down the decision in two weeks' time. The division's three judges have to render a unanimous decision. Otherwise, two other justices will have to sit with them, and a majority decision is needed for a ruling. If there's a conviction, Estrada's lawyers can file a motion for reconsideration. If they don't file this motion, the court's decision becomes final and executory within 30 days. The popular thinking is that the Sandiganbayan will rule on keeping Estrada in his Tanay rest house, not in the national penitentiary.

Assuming, however, that Estrada's lawyers decide to elevate the Sandiganbayan ruling to the Supreme Court, the latter will convene en banc to decide on it. Should the Court uphold the Sandiganbayan conviction, the ruling becomes final and executory after 15 days. Only then can a presidential pardon come into play. If the Sandiganbayan ruling is not appealed, the pardon could come earlier.

* * *

Many pundits see that an acquittal would be more complicated than a conviction, as this would cause the nation to have two presidents, with Estrada seeking to reclaim his old position. This must be in the minds of the graft court justices at this point.

* * *

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves is far less worried about his hurdling the Commission on Appointments than the economy's achieving the right revenue collection target. The reason is that the government's economic team, which he heads, fears that the fiscal program would be in danger if the tax revenue shortfall exceeds the target deficit this year. This worry has resulted in the relief of BIR Commissioner Jose Mario Buñag, under whose term tax collections have fallen lately. A recent phone conversation with Teves ended up as a *paaralang bayan*. I should explain that over the decades when he was the chair of the House economics committee, he and I would have periodically a conversation about the economy. He would explain its various aspects which I would write about as simply as I could.

* * *

This time Teves stressed that the government deficit, which in the past few years has been trimmed to the satisfaction of the international rating agencies (enough to merit better credit ratings), should not be allowed to go beyond P63 billion.

When the deficit goes up, government can opt to cut down on spending for infrastructure. Teves stressed, however, that we cannot sacrifice badly needed infrastructure, as this is what encourages domestic and international investors.

The other way to reduce the national deficit is to increase tax collection, not by imposing new taxes (the President said she won't do this) but by making collection more efficient and simplified (the better to eliminate opportunities for graft).

* * *

Teves explained that 70 percent of tax revenues are derived from the BIR, the rest from the Bureau of Customs and other government fees and charges. When BIR collection falls, government, in order to sustain development, has to resort to the selling of government corporate assets and other non-tax revenue measures—something it cannot keep doing for long. Teves stressed that the better way is to maintain a more efficient tax collection. He pointed out that RP's tax base is perhaps the smallest in the region with only about two million people paying taxes. The ideal ratio should be 10 percent of the population—meaning 8 million out of 85 million Filipinos.

With GMA's pledge not to raise taxes, Teves said the way to handle the problem of falling revenues is through a more efficient tax administration: enhancing the tax data base and cleaning up the taxpayers' list and the income tax structure. This means making sure the big income folks pay the correct taxes; and scrutinizing the ranks of the self-employed people—the doctors, lawyers, entrepreneurs, real estate people and others in the booming services sector—who may be underpaying their taxes.

What's wrong with this picture?

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH THIS PICture. No, it wasn't just the presence of former Vice President Teofisto Guingona among stalwarts of the opposition that was wrong with the photo on this paper's front page yesterday. There was also, or especially so, the tarpaulin declaring "Free Erap! Palayain si Erap" with the deposed President's photo and the exhortation that "The truth shall set you free."

Guingona's presence among opposition spokesman Adel Tamano, Sen. Jinggoy Estrada, Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay, Sen. Francis Escudero and Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim is no longer such a shocker. The former senator, who set the wheels rolling in the Erap impeachment trial with his "I Accuse" speech, has long been consorting with well-known Erap allies. Since he parted ways from President Macapagal-Arroyo, Guingona has more and more lent his presence not just to protest rallies but also to political opposition events.

The trouble is that opposition events these days are dominated by Erap friends, allies and partymates. Even if the ranks of those opposed to the Arroyo administration include many who are not necessarily pro-Erap. Indeed, a great many may even have been (or still are) morally certain about Estrada's guilt, and took part or even organized the "Edsa Dos" uprising that led to Erap's departure from Malacañang.

As I've said time and again on this space, one reason it's proving so difficult for the political opposition to gel is the ambivalence of those who reject the legitimacy of the GMA presidency but are not necessarily Erap partisans. And it's the shadow cast over the anti-GMA side by Erap's hulking figure that keeps so many otherwise thoughtful and involved citizens straddling the fence, or else on neutral ground.

* * *

STILL, to get back to the former vice president, who it seems has had a change of heart regarding President Erap, Guingona now makes it clear he believes it's time we bade goodbye to the Erap Saga, mainly by letting bygones be bygones.

Guingona's quote for the day: "He is a man who has found a new light and a new life. In his own private self, I think he has found the answer; he has new values and he is now a new man."

Well, I for one also believe in the redemptive power of suffering and incarceration. But those who are able to reform themselves behind bars do so only after they have undergone trial, been found guilty and served their sentence.

Erap, in case you forgot, has yet to be judged by the Sandiganbayan. True, it has taken the court six years for his trial to be heard. But in case you forgot, too, Erap has been doing time in rather cushy surroundings, in the comfort of his Taytay rest house, free to receive a never-ending stream of visitors and well-wishers, and even to father a child with one of his visiting mistresses.

A new man? Then I say bully for Erap, it's about time. But that's neither here nor there. The Sandiganbayan has yet to rule on his guilt or innocence on plunder charges, and if found guilty, Erap should serve his sentence, and in less plushy surroundings, I hope.

* * *

WHY is it important to see Erap facing the music and getting what is due him—freedom or more time in prison?

Because it is essential that we send a message to our people that crime deserves punishment, that the ends of justice are best served when the law is used to determine the guilt or innocence of an individual, regardless of who that individual is, and the power of the State is employed to ensure that those found guilty serve out the punishment meted out to them.

To free Erap now, before the Sandiganbayan has the chance to rule on the charges lodged against him, is to say that justice is negotiable, that if you're rich enough or powerful enough, or have enough friends in high places, then you can dodge your just punishment.

Which is why I'm disappointed that Guingona would base his call to free Erap on his perception that the former President has reformed and learned his lesson. I'm glad Erap shows signs of having learned from his mistakes, but that's not enough. He should accept and bow to the will of the Court, and if he should have to spend the rest of his life behind bars, then he can only enrich his own self-discovery in the peace and quiet of prison.

* * *

THERE are those who say, of course, that given the even worse consequences of "Edsa Dos," mainly the Arroyo administration, against which Erap's record of plunder pales in comparison, then we should simply say a pox on both your houses and let Erap go.

I am no fan of GMA myself, and I can believe the many tales of shenanigans in places high and low that are taking place today. But we're not playing a zero-sum game here. Graft and corruption in the Arroyo administration does not obviate graft and corruption during the Erap regime. One does not cancel out the other.

On the contrary, if we pursue to its just ends the trial of Erap on plunder charges, then all the more we should pursue the trial of Arroyo herself, or of her officials and cronies, if not through an impeachment process, then through the filing of charges and a trial.

Neither does a possible guilty verdict in the Erap trial mean that we should now forget the various scandals in the Arroyo administration and "move on" from there, as if Erap's being guilty means Arroyo is innocent.

What's "good" for Erap should be "good" for GMA as well. More important, our focus should be on what's "good" for the Filipino people—regardless of who gets judged and punished, and regardless of whether he/she has turned a new leaf, or is just using a story of moral reformation to disguise his/her guilt.

China's slave power

WORLD VIEW

Ma Jian

WHEN A GOVERNMENT-RUN BRICK PLANT IN Hongdong County of Shanxi Province was revealed to be using slave labor, a famous episode from a Beijing opera flashed through my mind. In that opera, a prostitute named Su San, after being sentenced to death, pleads for mercy to unconcerned passersby as she is marched down the main roads of Hongdong County in shackles.

As I click on the website of the county government, there is no mention of slave labor or child workers at the brick factory. All you can find are news readers from national television covering the smiling faces of people who come back to Hongdong to seek their roots and pay homage to their ancestors. There are also reports of visits by high officials to Hongdong.

Indeed, were it not for the 400 fathers who petitioned for the rescue of their kidnapped children who had been sold into slavery, Hongdong County would still remain a tourism hot spot for Chinese people seeking their roots. As a result of the slave-labor brick plants, as well as reports of an 8-year-old child worker being buried alive and migrant workers killed, Hongdong's name has become infamous.

Yet despite the scandal, migrant workers and children in school uniforms are still being abducted from other provinces and pushed into monstrous brick plants and coal mines. Girls are forced into prostitution at a mere $5 a session.

The 400 fathers of the enslaved children, of course, are left to wonder where, precisely, respect for life is in President Hu Jintao's so-called "harmonious society." How many more Chinese children will become slaves in the maw of our capitalist/communist system? Who is responsible when such crimes happen?

These men simply want their children back but all the government is doing is watching these anxious fathers with suspicion. Moreover, these fathers are allowed to demand only their children, not compensation. After all, the brick factory bosses paid 400 yuan for each child, so their property rights are at stake.

China is now a society rotten to the core. For slavery is not confined to Hongdong's brick plants. There are such dark spots everywhere in the country. What makes matters worse is that the state authorities, particularly the police, patrol these slave operations to keep them running.

Four years ago, a college graduate named Sun Zhigang was arrested for walking on the streets of the city of Guangzhou. He was beaten to death while in custody. This incident revealed the extent to which the police cooperated in turning ordinary Chinese into slaves. Media coverage fueled a backlash of overwhelming public revulsion.

But change went only skin-deep. Human trafficking was transferred from the police to job agencies and the Ministry of Labor Supervision. State officials themselves are among the worst human traffickers. And the grimmest statistic of all is that many child slaves who are rescued are resold by officials to another slave-labor plant.

Seven years ago, a lawmaker from Hunan province went to Shanxi province to rescue slave workers from brick plants. At that time, the rescued workers knelt down and wept. Fortunately they were not beaten or buried alive for not showing up for their shift, as had happened to others.

Today, however, that legislator would not be able to rescue a single worker, because the local government and police have learned from past experience how to keep busybodies away. There are more than 1,000 brick plants and coal mines around China, and most are under the protection of corrupt officials.

Hu Wenhai, a brave man from Shanxi who killed two corrupt officials, said before his execution, "Officials are forcing people to rebel. I can't let these assholes squeeze people any more. I know I'm going to die, but my death will get the attention of those officials."

So, instead of China being convulsed with rage at news that children are being turned into slaves, the media are censored and the 400 parents of the Hongdong children are blacklisted by the government. They cannot leave their homes to find their children. It seems today that in China the daily work of government is to keep people from protecting themselves and their families in an attempt to gloss over the crimes of a "harmonious society."

The socialism established by Mao Zedong has been replaced by a thoroughly cynical creed. Organized criminals lead much of the country's economic development. The former paradise of the poor has become a living hell for them. And the corrupt officials? You can be sure that, this time next year, they will be paying homage to their ancestors, as they tramp over the ground where child slaves were buried alive for daring to proclaim their humanity. ***Project Syndicate***

Ma Jian is the author of "Red Dust and The Noodlemaker."

Against the current

YOUNG BLOOD

Fra-and Timothy S. Quimpo

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—**Ed.**

BEING AN ENVIRONMENTALIST IS PROBABLY ONE OF the most thankless jobs in the world. The compensation is woefully small, and he often has to use his personal funds to finance environmental projects and research.

My parents are not rich. So what am I doing, working as an environmentalist? Why do I not join the hundreds of thousands of Filipinos who are migrating to greener pastures? Why not get myself employed in a big company that offers not only a high salary, but a car, a laptop and other cool freebies? Why work full-time on this advocacy?

After working for several years as an underpaid marine biologist, I recently came to a crossroads in my life. A reputable company offered me a starting salary that was more than twice what I am earning now, plus a brand-new car, which I could own after five years. It was every man's dream offer, a friend told me.

Had the offer been made four years ago, I would have turned it down outright. As a fresh graduate of marine biology, my idealism was intact and my resolve to save the environment was strong. But four years later and with my frustrations with environmental projects that are making slow or zero progress, not to mention my world-weariness and cynicism, I found myself saying, "What's the point? If I am able to save one or two animals, there will be hundreds killed illegally anyway." In other words, I must admit that I found the offer very attractive.

But then came the dream:

I am diving, though I can't tell exactly where. I am at the edge of a reef wall staring into the blue ocean. Behind me is a dying reef. The bleakness of the reef reflects the futility of all my struggles and the struggles of advocates before me.

I check my depth gauge. I am hovering at a depth of 30 feet. I sense something out there calling out to me. I just stare at the vast expanse before me. I want to move forward but I can't. Something out there is beckoning me.

Out of the blueness, a colossal silhouette begins to take form. At first I can't make out what it is. All I know is that it is big—no, humongous. It is coming directly toward me at a frightening speed. I feel alarmed but at the same time curious. If it is something dangerous, I reason, I wouldn't have a chance to escape anyway. I let my scientific curiosity get the better of me.

Before long, the gigantic silhouette transforms into the huge but gentle face of a whale. As it draws near, I see its eyes staring at me. It seems that I am not the only one stricken by curiosity. We hover around, our gazes transfixed for I don't know how long. I watch this fascinating being closely, mesmerized by its enormous size yet gentle aura.

As I observe closely, trying to identify what species it is (instinctive behavior for a marine biologist confronted by an unidentified species), I notice a big scar on the left side of its face. It does not look like a bite mark from a predator. Neither has it been the result of a fierce struggle with a giant prey. It is an unusual mark, most probably left by something unnatural.

After a few moments, the gentle leviathan slowly moves towards me. It stops within an arm's length from where I am, as if inviting me to touch it. In awe, I reach out towards its snout. As my hand land on the tip of its snout, a blinding light bursts upon us and I feel a sudden surge of electricity through my body. Startled, I close my eyes.

When I open my eyes again, everything looks different. I see a pod of whales. The pod is swimming straight when suddenly those in front veer toward the left, prompting the group to turn left. Then I see what the front-liners are avoiding: a fleet of big boats. Tourist boats perhaps; the whales might have strayed into a maritime corridor.

What happened next is something that will forever haunt me. As the whales try to swim away, a giant harpoon suddenly comes out of nowhere and hits the whale right in front of me. The whale struggles, causing the clear blue water of the ocean to change to a murky, blood-red. More harpoons are thrown and more dead whales float. Everywhere the pod goes, harpoons would rain on it. The whales are surrounded.

I am feeling utterly hopeless. Suddenly, I feel a sting on the left side of my face. I have been hit by a harpoon. Then I realize that I am part of the pod.

I struggle to remove the harpoon that lacerated my face. I feel the searing pain. Finally, I am able to pull out the giant spear, but the struggle has weakened me and I slowly sink into a deep abyss, motionless. I feel the cold as darkness envelopes me and I close my eyes.

When I open my eyes again, I am back at the dive spot. But the whales are leaving. I see the profiles of their flukes before the blue sea swallows them.

Still stunned by what has just happened, I have the uneasy feeling that I have stayed down for too long already. Indeed when I check my air tank, it is almost empty. I kick frantically trying to make an emergency ascent, but I don't break the surface.

It was at this point that I woke up, sweating and gasping for air. It was just a dream, but it rekindled the flame that led me to become an environmentalist in the first place and against all odds.

Despite global laws, endangered animals are still being hunted to the brink of extinction. These animals can't speak our language. They can't complain about how they are being persecuted mercilessly to satisfy the greed of many. If no one will fight for their right to exist in this world, how can they ever survive?

I cannot imagine a world with no other species except human beings. That is why I chose to be an environmentalist. Seeing sea turtle hatchlings scurrying back to the sea, or dolphins riding the bow of the boat or giant clams slowly growing through the years and knowing that in one way or another I have been a part of these is something that no amount of money can buy.

I know I am swimming against the current here. I know this is an endangered advocacy. But as long as I've got the mind to reason, the voice to speak out, and the muscles to swim, I will continue to fight for these animals and for the environment. And I don't need to get paid very well for doing it. Living my childhood dream of working in the natural world and practicing my calling to save the environment are reward enough.

Fra-and Timothy S. Quimpo, 26, is a marine biologist at the McKeough Marine Center/Biology Department of Xavier University-Ateneo de Cagayan.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.

LETTERS

Filipino farmers should plant potatoes instead of rice

THIS IS A REACTION TO THE LETTER "SELF-sufficiency key to food security." (INQUIRER, 7/3/07) Considering our typhoons, hilly terrain and need for large irrigation facilities, it is obvious that our cost of rice production is higher than that of China, Thailand and Vietnam. So why don't we grow potatoes instead? You can produce 40 tons of potatoes in one hectare of land, or 16 tons if grown organically with less water. This is still better than rice hybrids that produce 10 tons a hectare. Plus the fact that potatoes are more nutritious than rice. Potatoes would go a long way to help solve malnutrition. Currently, potatoes are more expensive than rice, but this is so because rice is subsidized and we have no real desire to import lots of potatoes.

The letter also fails to give a cost benefit analysis of subsidized rice production. Somehow, the National Food Authority thinks it is cheaper to charge the taxpayer for its personnel's salary, infrastructure, operations and budget, for buying and selling rice at a loss. Compounding this problem is that the NFA (by using taxpayers' money) seems to think it is better at deciding how the taxpayer should spend his money (subsidizing rice). Apparently, the taxpayer cannot spend his own money well enough to suit his own needs (buying more expensive local rice if he thinks he needs it or not). Let me ask the letter-sender, are we not subject to the whims of market forces if the NFA buys the rice? If a typhoon hits our harvest, will we not pay more for our rice by giving the NFA a bigger budget through taxes? Plus NFA personnel's salary, NFA operations, etc.?

But there is one consequence I can see if the government pursues this policy: the NFA may well become useless and may be abolished—leaving the NFA personnel without the job of making rice more expensive (through taxes). Is it a coincidence that NFA people are against this policy of supply stabilization? I think not.

—MARK BELO,
36 Bonifacio St., Ayala Heights, Diliman, QC

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Report on link to drug suspect baseless

THIS IS IN REFERENCE TO THE NEWS ITEM titled "Cops link actor's wife to Pasig drug mart." (INQUIRER, 6/25/07) The report linked Fatima Davao to Amin Imam Boratong and his wife Mimie. To quote:

"Fatima Davao, the wife of actor Bing Davao, had links to suspected Pasig City shabu market operator Amin Imam Boratong, an officer of the Philippine National Police Anti-Illegal Drugs Special Operation Task Force (AIDSOTF) said Sunday.

"AIDSOTF lawyer Roque Merdegia said Fatima had been on the police watch list because of her connections to Boratong and his wife Mimie.

"Boratong was the alleged owner of a compound in Pasig City that housed 30 to 40 shabu dens which were raided by police in February 2006.

"Boratong is now detained at the National Bureau of Investigation pending trial on drug charges, while Mimie is at large, although there is a pending arrest warrant against her for the murder of informant German Colisao.

"Merdegia said Fatima was involved in Boratong's 'sales' network and had been on the police list for five years."

The linking of our client Amin Boratong—and his wife Mimie—to Fatima Davao is a very serious matter; it is highly irresponsible and baseless. There is no truth to it. Our client does not know anyone named Fatima Davao. The article is likewise libelous and damaging.

While it is a fact that our client Amin is a suspected shabu den operator, the case against him is still pending litigation and has not been decided on. We maintain that one is presumed innocent until proven otherwise. But categorically linking our clients to all the cases of drug pushing and other drug incidents is totally unfair and highly irregular.

—QUIRINO A. MARQUINEZ,
Marquinez Pabalate Taton and Associates,
2409 Syquia St., Sta. Ana, Manila

The story was based on information obtained from the police. However, it also quoted another source who said that the information had not been fully verified as the investigation on the Taguig suspects was yet incomplete. Nothing in the story categorically links lawyer Marquinez's client(s) to Fatima Davao.

—KRISTINE L. ALAVE,
reporter, Inquirer

NBI report on Lanao House race not conclusive

I AM WRITING IN BEHALF OF THE WINNING congressional candidate for the first district of Lanao del Norte (based on official Comelec records) regarding the erroneous and misleading news report that appeared in the INQUIRER's July 2 issue.

The news report stated that the "National Bureau of Investigation has established that the ballot boxes were 'no longer in their original state'." A closer scrutiny of the news article will show that the NBI report is not conclusive. We would like to point out that while the ballot boxes were allegedly no longer in their original state, the NBI did not find any discrepancy or tampering in the certificates of canvass (CoCs) representing the votes from the towns of Maigo, Kauswagan and Bacolod.

Since the NBI found no evidence of tampering on the CoCs (the documents used for canvassing), the Special Provincial Board of Canvassers (SPBOC) of Lanao del Norte canvassed the same in the presence of all the parties concerned. It must be noted that the CoCs canvassed by the SPBOC were genuine and authentic.

It was also reported that the CoC for the town of Kauswagan was not entered in the official count as it was misplaced. Again, we would like to point out that the SPBOC last June 1 canvassed the CoC for Kauswagan and included it in the official tally. Since the CoC for Kauswagan was canvassed by the SPBOC, there is no basis to say that the CoC was set aside following the doctrine of "statistical impossibility."

The doctrine is not applicable in this case because the number of registered voters did not equal the number of votes cast for one candidate and there is no showing that the other party obtained no votes at all. In fact, the total number of votes cast for all the candidates is still below the number of registered voters. The appeal of Councilor Vicente Belmonte, through his lawyer, implies a different conclusion that has no legal basis.

—RASSENDELL REX F. GINGOYON,
legal counsel for Gov. Imelda Q. Dimaporo,
Unit 1110 City and Land Mega Plaza Bldg.,
ADB Ave., Ortigas Center, Pasig City

Harvard graduation feat not a 'rare honor'

THIS IS ABOUT OSCAR FRANKLIN TAN'S commencement speech, which was the subject of a news feature that appeared in the INQUIRER issue of June 8, 2007. Unable to find articles in the Harvard websites that would back up the INQUIRER report, I wrote Harvard to verify its accuracy. I got a reply from Eliza Pickering, an editorial intern for Harvard Magazine. In her response, she stated: "I was told by the Law School administration that the amount of press it has received is quite unusual." By "press," she meant the local Filipino media since no one else carried the news except them.

The INQUIRER reported that Tan received "the rare honor as the commencement speaker of the Harvard Law School." However, Pickering said that "students campaign on campus to be elected by their classmates as graduation speakers." Where is the Filipino press' "truth in reporting"? How much of what it prints can we believe?

It is indeed an honor for one to be elected by his master of laws classmates to be their class speaker, but the honor is not one that can be classified as "rare."

Nonetheless, Tan's speech, exhorting his Harvard classmates to look at themselves as citizens of the world, was a great speech.

The Harvard Law School commencement speaker was Guido Calabrese, former dean of the Yale Law School and a judge of the US Court of Appeals. It would have been indeed a "rare honor" if Tan had been the law school commencement speaker instead of Judge Calabrese.

—BOB MANASAN,
bobmanasan@msn.com

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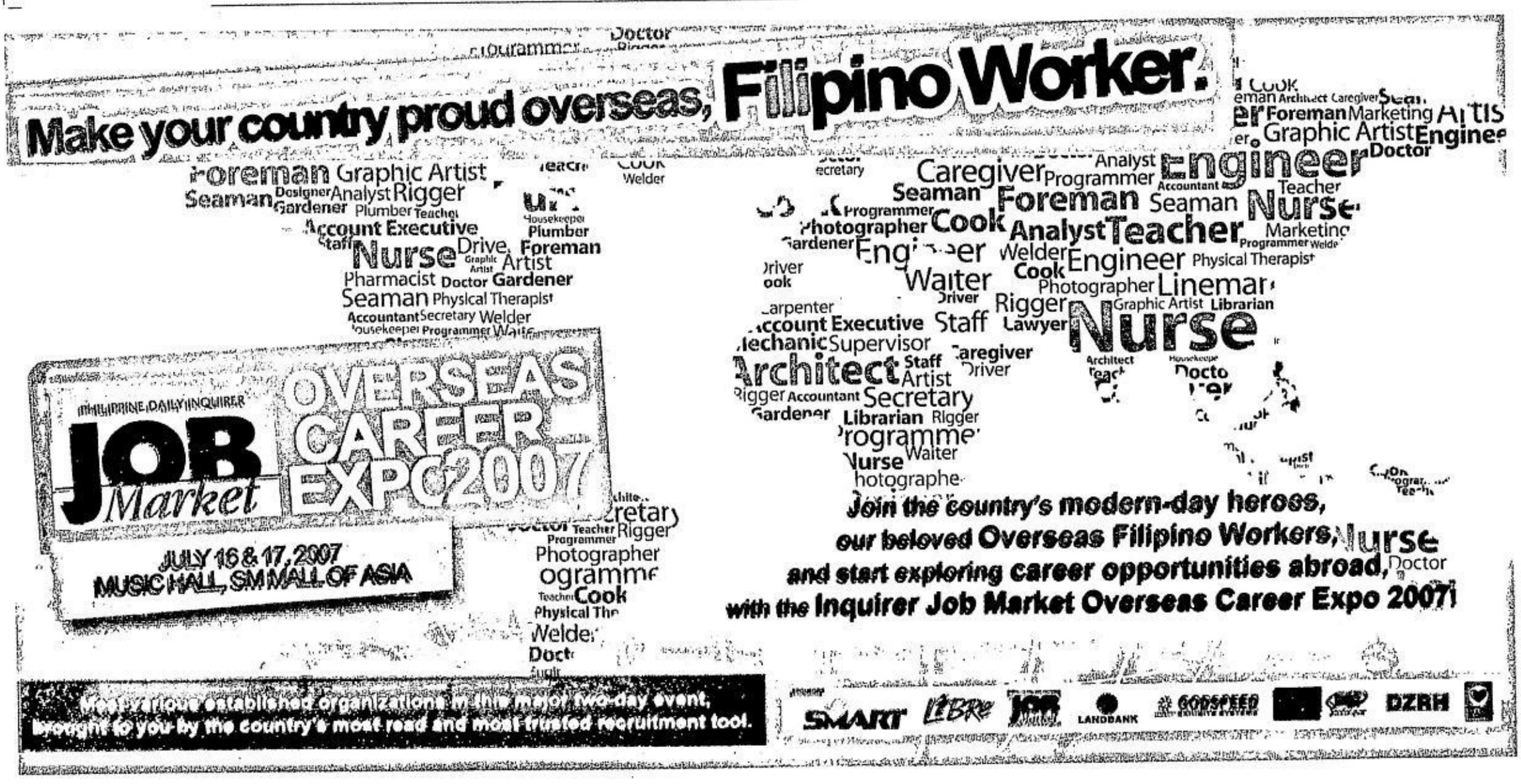

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No good news awaits Italian envoy

ZAMBOANGA CITY—THERE WILL BE NO GOOD news for Italian lawmaker Margherita Boniver.

Boniver was scheduled to meet with top military and civilian officials here Friday night. But Task Force Bossi chief Col. Jovencio Magalso said there was nothing to tell the lawmaker about developments in the rescue operation for kidnapped priest Giancarlo Bossi.

"I am afraid we cannot deliver good news for her," Magalso said.

Senior Supt. Francisco Cristobal, police chief of Zamboanga Sibugay, can only say the same.

"I wish something positive will turn out anytime today (Friday) so we can deliver her good reports regarding Bossi," Cristobal said.

"Right now, no proof of life, no proof of whereabouts, but there were lots of reports on sightings but no positive confirmation," Cristobal added.

Fr. Gianni Battista Sandalo, regional superior of the Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions (Pime), said Boniver was expected to arrive in this city on board a military plane at around 6 p.m. Friday.

"She might also meet us (Pime) in another venue," Sandalo told the INQUIRER.

Magalso said they would tell Boniver that "everyone is involved in the search and rescue for Bossi."

"No one is resting. In fact, we double up our efforts but if she will ask where Bossi is, it's already a different story and difficult to answer."

Cristobal said that with the endless search for Bossi, "our funds are draining."

Despite this, he said, "we keep on looking for him."

Sandalo earlier expressed exasperation over the failure of authorities to find Bossi.

"Why is it so difficult to find a big, tall Caucasian man in areas where he is supposedly a familiar face to almost everyone?" he asked.

Sandalo said he could not understand why it was so hard for authorities to locate Bossi, who is a familiar face in the Zamboanga Penisula.

Fr. Luciano Benedetti, also of Pime, said Bossi knows the peninsula, including its remote villages, its leaders and residents.

Benedetti said Bossi, who is 57 years old, "easily gets tired."

But Magalso said "if kidnappers are determined to keep him (Bossi) away from the public's eye, they can do so."

Magalso said they suspect the kidnappers hid Bossi in some makeshift shelters in the coastal town.

"Given all the characteristics of the priest and his features, the kidnappers will definitely try their best to hide him," Magalso said.

Magalso added that they have already printed thousands of leaflets and posters with Bossi's pictures on it and distributed these "so even ordinary people can help us locate him."

"All we need is an eyewitness and it will be easy for us to determine if the priest and kidnappers passed by a certain area," said Magalso.

Maj. Gen. Nemehias Pajarito, chief of the Tabak 1st Infantry Division, said neither Bossi nor his abductors were in the boundaries of Lanao del Norte and Lanao del Sur.

Pajarito said three battalions had been deployed in the search.

He said the 32nd Infantry Battalion of the Philippine Army had already pulled out from their posts in the boundaries of the two Lanao provinces.

The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) was first to withdraw forces from the search and rescue operations, to prevent clashes with government troops.

But the MILF said it was ready to help once the priest and his kidnappers are located. *Julie S. Alipala and Richel Umel, Inquirer Mindanao*

SC imposes fine on judge who lost case papers

By Carla P. Gomez
Inquirer Visayas

BACOLOD CITY—THE SUPREME Court found a regional trial court judge based in Silay City guilty of gross negligence for misplacing the records of a case he was handling.

The SC imposed a fine of P10,000 on RTC Branch 40 Judge Reynaldo Alon for negligence.

The SC issued a decision June 27 on Alon's case.

SC Associate Justice Ma. Alicia Austria-Martinez penned the resolution, which was concurred in by associate justices Consuelo Ynares-Santiago, Minita Chico-Nazario and Antonio Eduardo Nachura.

The SC ruling said it was the judge's responsibility to ensure that records of cases in court are "properly kept and (these cases) disposed of promptly and expeditiously."

New SC rules require judges to decide on cases in 60 days.

Stern warning

"It was bad enough that respondent failed to submit his investigation report and recommendation within the prescribed period. But to also lose the records of the case is unjustifiable," the SC said.

The SC issued a stern warning that a similar offense in the future shall be dealt with more severely.

The case is an offshoot of the administrative complaint of Lina Lim Tan against Homero L. Robles, Sheriff IV, RTC, Branch 69, Silay City and docketed as A.M. OCA IPI No. 01-1167-P.

The SC, in a July 1, 2002 resolution, referred the administrative complaint to Alon for investigation and recommendation within 60 days from receipt of the records.

However, Alon submitted his investigation report and recommendation on May 13, 2005, or almost three years after the required date of submission, the SC said.

The SC then directed Alon to explain the unreasonable delay in rendering his report.

Reasons

Alon said he had not given much thought about the case and cited several causes of the delay such as his being replaced as executive judge in 2003 and being re-appointed only in April 2005, in addition to his tasks as judge-designate of Branch 63, La Carlota City, the SC noted.

The SC also cited as untenable Alon's assertion that the delay in the disposition of the case stemmed from the request of the complainant to hold in abeyance the investigation until an affidavit of retraction could be filed.

"The respondent should have known that an affidavit of desistance does not operate to divest this Court of jurisdiction to determine the truth behind the matter stated in the complaint," the SC pointed out.

The court's disciplinary authority could not be dependent on or frustrated by private arrangements between parties, it added.

"The respondent should have, therefore, met the issue head-on without any further delay," the SC said.

TALL ORDER
President Macagapal-Arroyo strikes a conversation with a bulldozer operator who was working on the expansion of the Bagabag Airport in Bagabag, Nueva Vizcaya.
VN BILLON

C. Luzon Army, PNP execs to sign new plan vs guerrillas

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

CAMP OLIVAS, PAMPANGA—TOP military and police officials in Central Luzon are scheduled to sign here on July 11 a memorandum of agreement on a joint counter-insurgency plan that aims to put an end to the communist rebellion in the region by 2010.

The plan, which was finalized last Thursday, is independent of an antiterrorism program being prepared in relation to the local implementation of the Human Security Act, the regional police director, Chief Supt. Ismael Rafanan, said in a phone interview on Friday.

The local enforcement of the new law would have to wait until after the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) of the law were made, he said. The implementation is supposed to start on July 15.

"We did not delve too much on it [during the conference] because it still did not have an IRR," Rafanan said of the controversial law that political activists had decried as a tool of the Arroyo administration to repress dissent.

Distinct orders

At Thursday's meeting in Fort Magsaysay in Nueva Ecija, he said it was clear to military and police commanders that the anti-insurgency and antiterror plans were "distinct from each other."

Rafanan said the new, three-year regional anti-insurgency program was made in line with Executive Order No. 546 of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Signed last year, the EO directed the Philippine National Police to "actively support" the Armed Forces in internal security operations.

Rafanan said the final draft of the MOA recognizes the lead role of the Army in dealing with the insurgency problem.

The PNP, on the other hand, will not only provide intelligence information but will also conduct combat operations in coordination with the Army's 7th Infantry Division.

"What we are trying to achieve this time is a more unified effort in solving insurgency," Rafanan said.

Before it spread to several regions in the country, communist rebellion took roots in Central Luzon with the founding of the old Communist Party of the Philippines in 1930 and the new CPP in 1968 and their respective armies, the Hukbong Mapagpalaya ng Bayan and the New People's Army.

Clearing operations

But the plan, said Rafanan, does not employ military solutions only.

"Local governments and government agencies are going to handle the developmental phase by addressing the roots of rebellion like poverty and ignorance through economic programs," he said.

Military and police commanders are set to sign the MOA in the presence of governors and mayors from Aurora, Bataan, Bulacan, Nueva Ecija, Pampanga Tarlac, Zambales convened for the meeting here of the regional peace and order council on Wednesday.

Senior Supt. Abelardo Villacorta, chief of the regional police's plan and operations office, said the new program seeks to "clear all guerrilla fronts and neutralize the political-military structures of the enemy in the region."

Bus firm told to stick to antiterror deal

COTABATO CITY—POLICE AUthorities in North Cotabato have appealed to the management of Weena bus company to stick to the security arrangement between the police and bus firm officials to avoid a repeat of bomb attacks on the buses.

Senior Insp. Joyce Berrey, North Cotabato police spokesperson, said bus units of Weena were violating the firm's own policies when it started picking up passengers in between terminals along the Davao-Cotabato route.

"We appeal to them to observe self-restraint to save passengers' lives," she told radio station dxND in Kidapawan City.

Following the series of bomb attacks against the bus firm last month that claimed at least 10 lives, the Weena bus company decided to allow passengers to board and disembark only in bus terminals.

Bomb attacks occurred in Bansalan, Davao del Sur, Cotabato City and Matalam, North Cotabato in June.

But lately, Berrey said, drivers have been violating the police-bus firm arrangement.

Eduardo Soledad, Weena bus company terminal manager in Cotabato City, said he will act on the police authorities' appeal.

Bus drivers, especially of the non-aircondition units, are taking in passengers along the highway, a practice that made the bus firm vulnerable to bomb attacks.

Police have deployed marshals aboard the bus to check on all bags and boxes carried by passengers. Bomb-sniffing dogs were also deployed at every bus terminal.

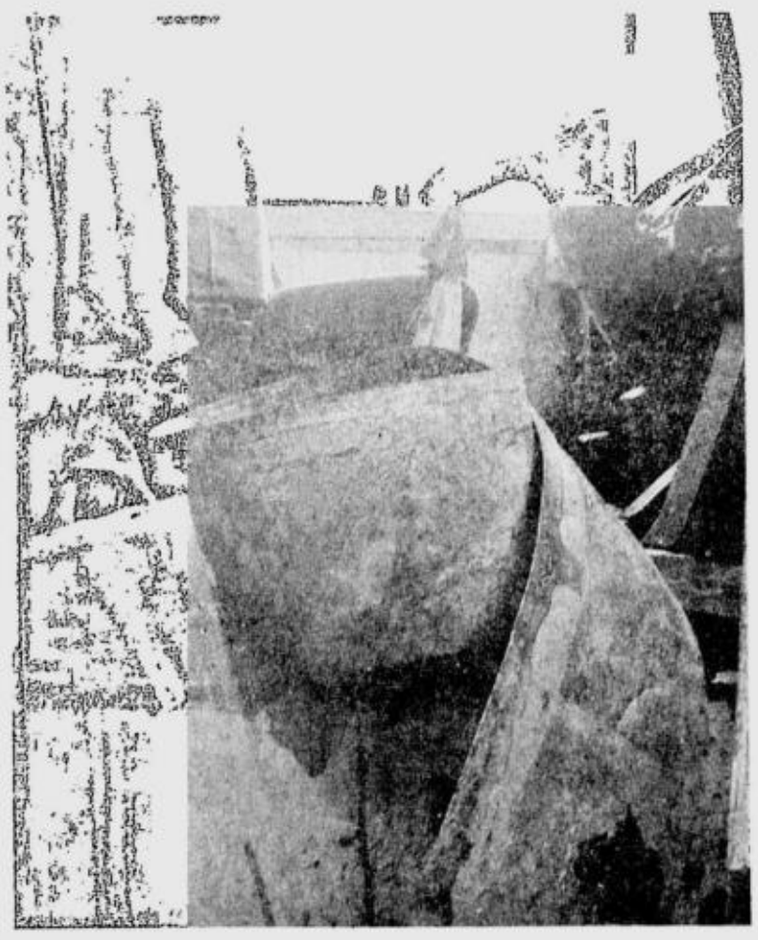
"The bus company has lowered its guard," Berrey said, citing complaints from commuters.

Alejandro Simbulan, a regular bus passenger of the Davao bound buses from here, said he overheard bus drivers saying that they have to pick passengers "to earn more."

"This is dangerous because some buses have no marshals, and passengers noticed that the bus conductors do not check on the boxes and back packs carried by riding individuals," he told the INQUIRER.

He said security only becomes tight after a bomb attack.

North Cotabato Vice Gov. Emmanuel Piñol has directed the local police to conduct mobile checkpoints to check on buses in between terminals. *Edwin O. Fernandez, Inquirer Mindanao*



THE EFFECTS of a recent bomb attack on a Weena bus in its terminal in Bansalan, Davao del Sur. Eight people were killed here.
ORLANDO DINOY/INQUIRER MINDANAO

Tampakan mayor nabbed for 2004 murder of bet

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—POlice arrested yesterday the mayor of Tampakan, South Cotabato, in connection with the July 2004 murder of defeated mayoral candidate Gregorio Banal.

Senior Supt. Robert Kiunisala, South Cotabato police chief, said Mayor Bienvenido "Bonbon" Barroso did not resist arrest when police served the arrest warrant issued by a court against him.

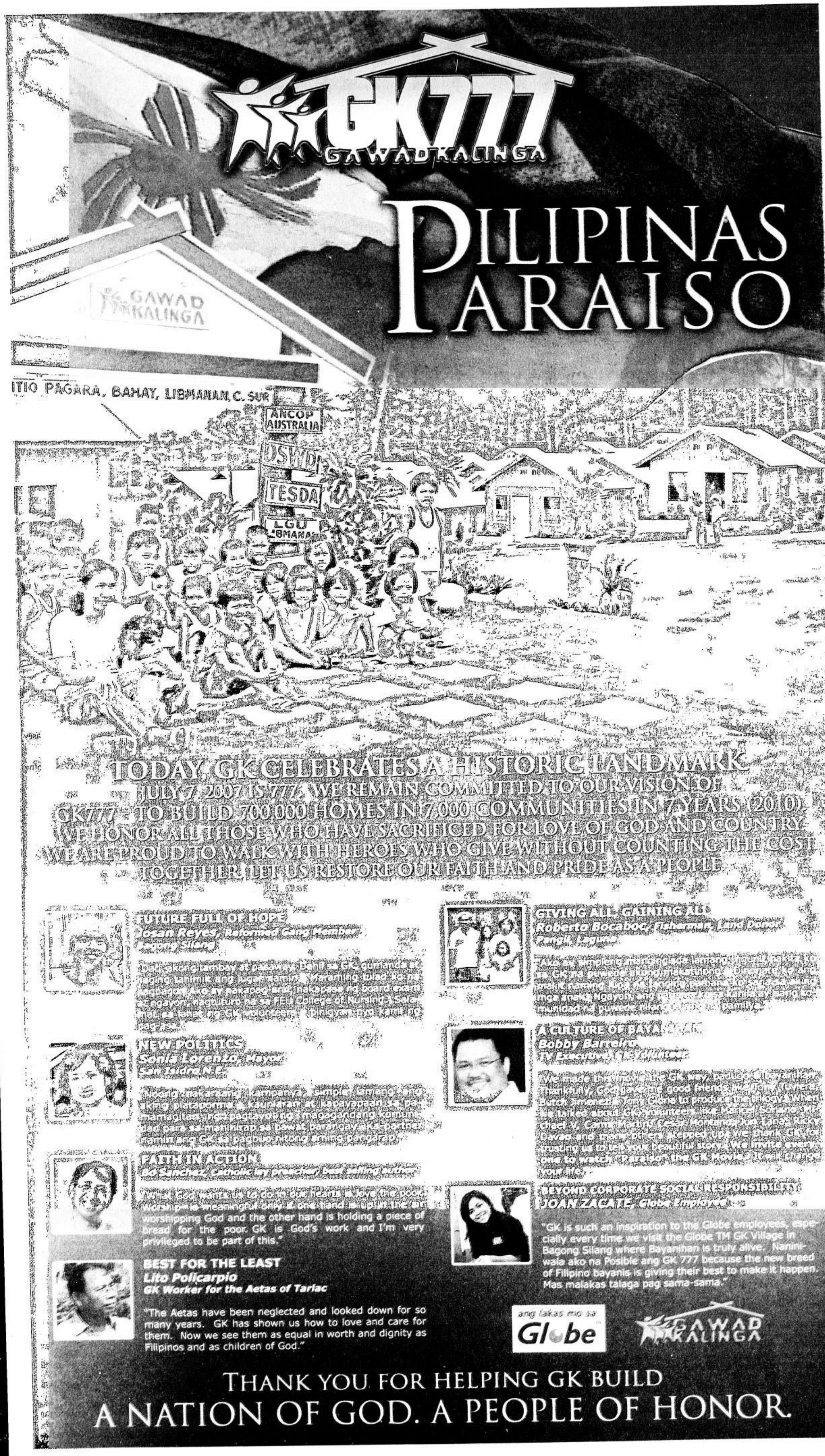
Kiunisala said his office received a copy of the arrest warrant issued by Judge Jose Mendoza, of the Regional Trial Court Branch 55 based in Manila, just a few days ago.

Barroso, and his uncle Henry Barroso, were tagged by witnesses as the masterminds in the killing of Banal.

Banal, a businessman in Tampakan, was gunned down on July 28, 2004 by three motorcycle-riding men in downtown Tampakan.

The Barrosos, however, denied the charge.

The family of the victim petitioned the court to transfer the venue of the court hearings to Manila for security reasons and to ensure a fair trial of the case. *Aquiles Zonio, Inquirer Mindanao*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Editor Jun Bandayrel
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A festive blast into the Warays' past

By Vicente S. Labro
Tacloban City

FOR TWO WEEKS, TACLOBAN, THE premier city of Eastern Visayas, trembled from a frenzy of activities, highlighted by festivities that gave a glimpse of the people's rich heritage.

The merriment was part of the annual celebration of the feast of Señor Sto. Niño, the patron saint of Tacloban and Leyte.

The Kasadyaan-Pintados Festival of Festivals on June 30 lured thousands of spectators, including foreign tourists who were treated to a dance extravaganza that portrayed the way of life, livelihood and religious beliefs of the early inhabitants.

The dance parade along the major streets ended at the city sports complex for the showdown of groups in colorful costumes. This year, the contingent of Abuyog, Leyte, which presented the Buyogan Festival, won the competition.

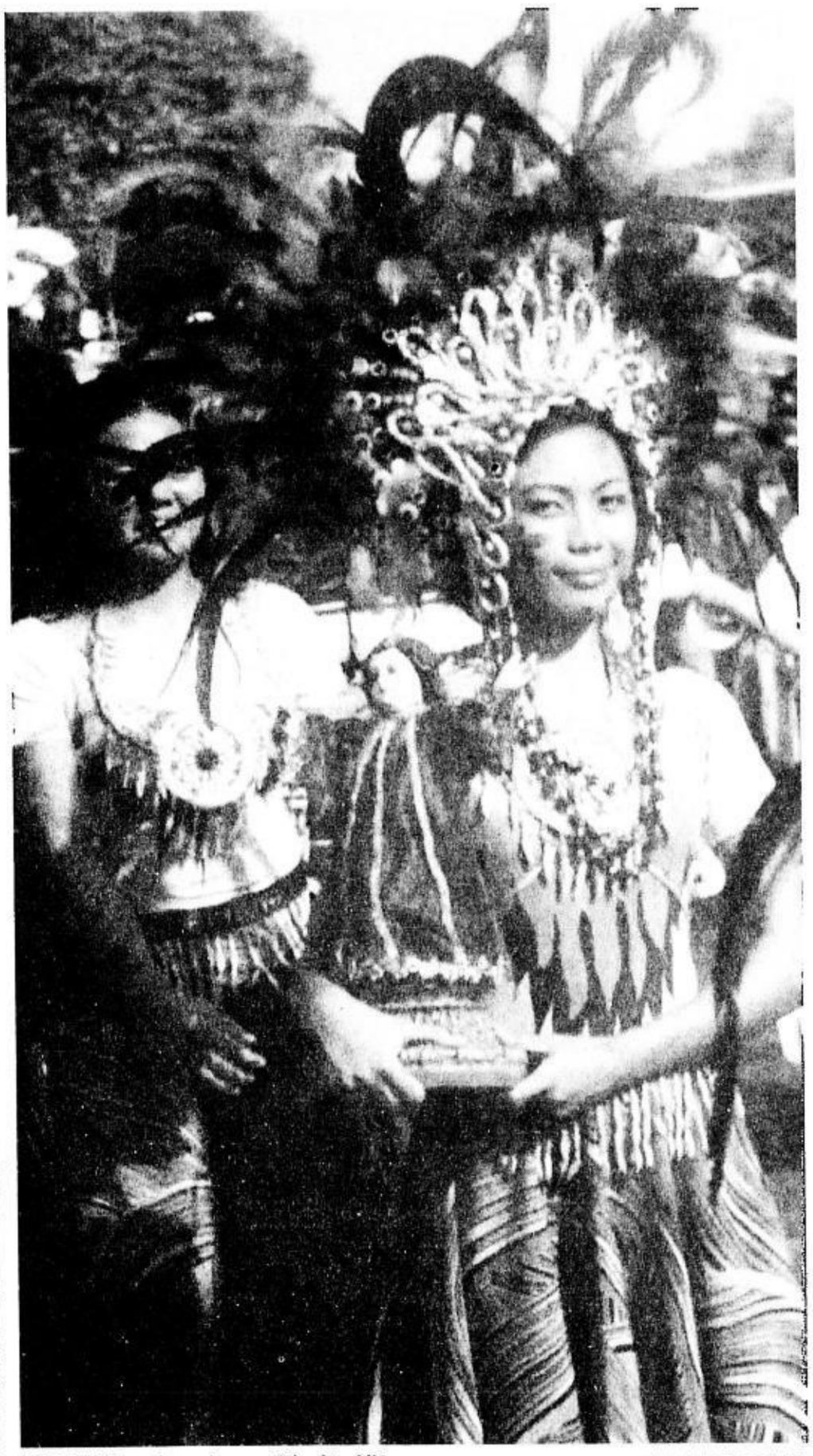
The event is the region's version of the Sinulog of Cebu, the Dinagyang of Iloilo, and the Ati-atihan of Kalibo—all held in honor of the Child Jesus.

But unlike in other places, where the feast day of the Sto. Niño is held in January, Tacloban has been celebrating it every June 30 for the past 118 years.

'El Capitan'

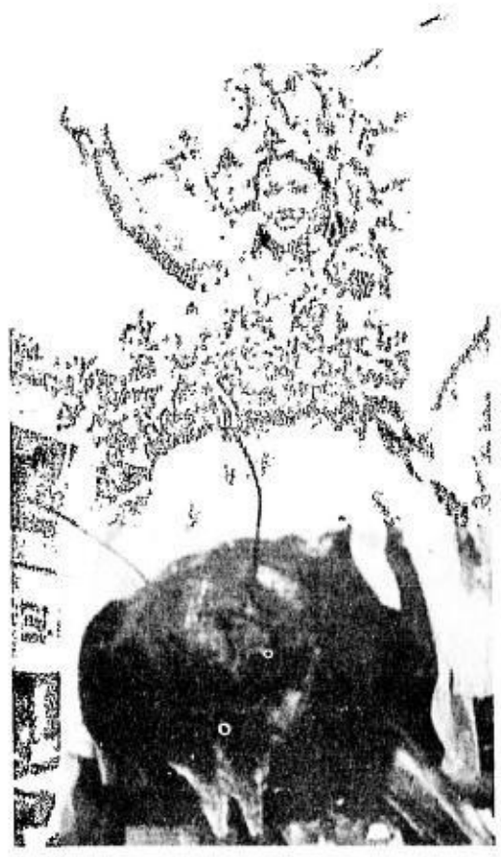
An incident more than a century ago changed the way the feast was observed in the city. In late 1888, the image of the Sto. Niño was brought to Manila for new vestments and restorative work. It was shipped back to Manila in January 1889, just a couple of weeks before the fiesta.

On its way to Tacloban, the boat carrying the image caught fire somewhere between the islands of Romblon and Marinduque. In the ensuing commotion, the image was among the cargo that was jettisoned.



A DANCER carries an image of the Sto. Niño.

PHOTOS BY VICENTE S. LABRO



THIS WOMAN riding on a queen bee leads the contingent from Abuyog, Leyte—the Buyogan Festival—that won this year's Kasadyaan-Pintados Festival of Festivals in Tacloban City.

FEMALE performers show their dancing skill.

The loss of the image saddened the people of Tacloban. Several months later, a new image of the Holy Child was procured and it was named the "Teniente." (The missing Sto. Niño was known as "El Capitan.")

In May 1889, however, a fisherman recovered a crate with a marking of "Sto. Niño Patron de Tacloban" floating near Semirara Island off Mindoro.

A team was sent to verify the report and bring it back to Tacloban. On June 30, while the people were preparing for a procession of the image of San Roque to implore an end to a cholera epidemic that struck their community, word spread that the "El Capitan" has finally arrived.

The people rejoiced as they reunited with the image of the Sto. Niño. It was said that those who were ill were healed when the procession passed by them.

Since then, Taclobanons decided to have the feast day of the Holy Child fall on June 30. They celebrate their fiesta with a concelebrated Mass, and fluvial and land processions to show their love and devotion to the Sto. Niño.

Another religious event observed every fiesta is the "Balyu-an Rites," or the exchange of the images of the Sto. Niño. It is said that the venerated image enshrined at the Sto. Niño Church originated in Samar.

According to legend, the parish priest of Basey town in Samar just across the San Juanico Strait had exchanged the big image of the Sto. Niño of Barrio Busacada in Basey with a smaller one belonging to Kankabatok, the ancient name of Tacloban.

For several decades, this act of swapping images has been reenacted in the "Balyu-an Rites," participated in by the parish priests and local officials of Tacloban and Basey.

Subiran Regatta

Another activity that dwelt on the Warays' past is the Subiran Regatta, sponsored mainly by the Department of Tourism.

For the past 31 years now, the sailboat race has always drawn crowds. On June 28, it lured 47 participants and hundreds of spectators.

Used by the early Warays who were mostly seafarers, the "subiran" or wind-blown outrigger with sail has been a useful means of transportation of small fishermen in Leyte and Samar.

Boatmen from Barangay Visoria in Carigara, Leyte, won most of the prizes of the 8-nautical mile race.

Frisbee fever grips Iloilo City

By Ma. Diosa Labiste
Iloilo City

NO LONGER WOULD THE ILONGGO PEOPLE consider frisbee a game of catch for dogs after Iloilo City witnessed the first Ultimate Frisbee Tournament at La Paz district plaza on June 30.

Hosted by the 9-month-old Iloilo Ultimate Club, the event brought together players from Manila and Boracay, who were the favorites to grab the top posts.

It was the Iloilo club's second time to join any tournament after the first in May in Boracay. While they finished last in a five-team round robin match on Saturday, the Ilonggo team considered it an honor to be throwing discs with the strong players in the country.

Just before dark, the rain-soaked players decided to declare two teams from Boracay in first place; Manila, second; Iloilo team 1, third; and Iloilo team 2, fourth.

Playing the game

Frisbee is played with a flying disc, but it is far from a mere throwing game. It combines the highpoints of popular sports—the passing and the fluidity of soccer, the jumps and pivots of basketball, and the thrilled touchdown of football.

Much like soccer and football, the game is played on a rectangular patch with end zones or scoring areas. It's a fast-paced, almost no-contact sport that allows women to play alongside men, three to four in a team of seven in every game.

A growing sport, frisbee is under the watch of Philippine Ultimate Sport, which has at least 500 members spread in more than a dozen clubs all over the country.

Some clubs have online presence in websites, as well as Friendster, blogs and YouTube. They give insight into their growth, seriousness in promoting the game, and age level.

'Arf, arf, arf'

Iloilo's first taste of the ultimate frisbee came in July 2006 when a young Ilonggo professional, Dale John Sotelo, got a phone call from another Ilonggo yuppie, Felix Ray Villa, to play frisbee.

Villa didn't know that Sotelo's disc history was as a varsity player in New York's Bronx Science High School from 1992 to 1995. In 1996, while on vacation in Iloilo City, Sotelo introduced the disc but it never caught interest then.

In September last year, Sotelo and his cousin, Rodolfo Besa, and two women friends, June Ann Rosales and Zaza Sermonia, brought the game to the football field of Central Philippine University. Instead of toasting the new game, bystanders were shouting "Arf, arf, arf."

Sotelo and his friends moved to La Paz plaza and were able to assemble a team from bystanders and passersby, who could not resist tossing the disc.

Base of the game

In the next three months, the plaza became the base of the game, now having as players doctors, nurses, a lawyer, policeman, students and pastors. From the converts came dedicated members like Angelo Robite, Paul Abaygar, Raessan Sancio, Noroding Batokapal, Esmael Sultan, Anabelle Bolivar and Janice Intila.

ILOILO players during a game against the Manila team

ARNOLD ALMACEN

Abaygar and Sancio are nursing students who find time to play frisbee in between hospital duties and schoolwork. "It relieves us of stress and keeps us alert," said Sancio.

Abaygar and Robite decided to bring back the game to the CPU and, this time, it drew many students.

The CPU group eventually provided the members of the Iloilo Ultimate Club to represent the city in 2007 Asian Beach Ultimate Tournament in Boracay in May.

The club placed 12th out of the 16 teams that competed. It was composed of Sotelo, Abaygar, Sancio, Neco French Tupas, Olivier Togonon, Rey Ben Lataquin, Jonel Baulinao, P.R. Melo, January Conlu, Liza Marie Lacal and Sultan.

Sotelo said it was "not bad for their virgin experience in an official competition."

The Iloilo Ultimate Club has 70 members, 20 of them women.

Sponsorship for the Iloilo tournament was not much of a problem, said Sotelo. Most of the donors were friends of the local players, and Sotelo took it as a sign that ultimate frisbee game is on the rise.

More Sports stories on A27 to 30

ALASKA center Sonny Thoss sneaks a layup past the defense of Talk 'N Text import JJ Sullinger in the first quarter of Game 1 of the best-of-seven championship series between the Aces and the Phone Pals. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Alaska defuses TNT

Red Bull takes 3rd; PBA unveils 'Super Sunday'

GAME TOMORROW (Araneta Coliseum)
6 p.m.—Alaska vs. Talk 'N Text

By Musong R. Castillo

SIMPLY DOMINATING.

There was no other way to describe how Alaska played last night as the Aces tore Talk 'N Text apart from late in the second period of a 113-85 rout at the Araneta Coliseum to draw first blood in their PBA Fiesta Cup championship series.

The Aces erased a 17-point second quarter deficit and put on their skates in the third to cruise to leads of as many as 22 points and win the series-opener in a manner no one thought was possible.

Rosell Ellis had a triple double with 22 points, 13 rebounds and 10 assists, while Willie Miller scored 22 and Mike Cortez chipped in with 20 as the core of the Alaska backcourt humbled its Talk 'N Text counterparts.

Mac Cardona, who was hyped as the key to Talk 'N Text's bid, was held by Miller and Cortez to just 13 points, a far cry from his 27.5 average in the playoffs.

"I'm shocked," Alaska coach Tim Cone later said. "I don't know how we were able to win this way with the kind of talent that they (Phone Pals) have.

"But we can't be satisfied with this victory. This is just one game out of seven."

The Aces grabbed a total of 60 rebounds compared to 38 by the Phone Pals and Ellis' 10 feeds was just equal the entire Talk 'N Text output. Alaska had 25 total assists and 27 second chance points compared to two for the Phone Pals.

"In the beginning, I thought we weren't mentally ready to lay it all on the line," said Cone, who went into the game handicapped by the absence of Jeffrey Cariaso because of injury. "And to tell you the truth, I didn't know that (in the first half) it was going to be our night."

The Aces trailed early in the second period, 19-36, but regained their composure quickly to end the first half already a point up, 45-44.

And that was all that Alaska needed, as the Aces came up with runs one after the other in the third, including a 14-6 spurt that all but put the game to bed, 82-61, heading into the period's closing seconds.

Meanwhile, James Penny scored 27 points and Cyrus Baguio had 10 of his 18 in the fourth period last night to lead Red Bull to a 103-96 victory over San Miguel Beer for third place.

It was the second third place finish in franchise history for Red Bull, which went through a lot of adversities the entire season, including the loss of its cornerstone, Enrico Villanueva to San Miguel in a controversial trade mid-tournament.

"Third place is not a bad finish, especially with what we've been through (this year)," coach Yeng Guiao said. "I'm very proud of our finish."

The next season, meanwhile, opens with a "Super Sunday" on Sept. 23 featuring all 10 teams playing simultaneously in different venues all over the country.

Commissioner Noli Eala bared that the board unanimously agreed to hold "Super Sunday" during a meeting on Wednesday night.

The scores:

First Game

RED BULL 103—Penny 27, Bagulo 18, Sharma 17, Najorda 11, Fonacier 7, Hrabak 6, Ybañez 4, Alvarez 4, Cruz 4, Robinson 3, Bugia 2, Camaso 0.

SAN MIGUEL BEER 96—Young 18, Espinas 15, Peña 13, Wilson 12, Cablay 12, Villanueva 11, Gonzales 5, Adriano 5, Racela 3, Tenorio 2.

Quarters: 30-24, 63-50, 81-80, 103-96

Second Game

ALASKA 113—Miller 22, Ellis 22, Cortez 20, Hugnatan 12, Ferriols 12, Thoss 10, Laure 8, Bajar 3, Singson 2, Belasco 2, Aban 0.

TALK 'N TEXT 85—Sullinger 25, Cardona 13, Allado 12, De Ocampo 10, Billones 9, Belano 8, Carey 4, Santos 2, Washington 2, Fran 0, Noble 0, Pablo 0.

Quarters: 16-28, 45-44, 82-63, 113-85

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Kazakh spoils RP wrestler's medal attempt

By June Navarro

ROMEO CALDERON HAD THE CHANCE TO salvage a medal for the Philippines but Kazakhstan's Zhangeldy Azkenov spoiled his valiant effort yesterday at the start of the 2007 Asian Junior Wrestling Championships at the Ninoy Aquino Stadium.

Calderon, who reached the medal round by sheer luck, yielded the first point of their Greco Roman 50-kilogram match to Azkenov en route to a 1-3 defeat.

Francis Isidro and United States-based Reynaldo Tañada were also eliminated from the medal race in the boys' Greco Roman 55 kg and 60 kg, respectively.

Isidro yielded to Ildar Hafizov of Uzbekistan, 0-5, and Tanada, who flew all the way from San Francisco, California, failed to hurdle China's Zhang Bulvoge, 0-3.

Azkenov sent Calderon rolling on the mat twice in the second round, prompting the judges to award the win to the Kazakh by superiority.

"He (Azkenov) has a strong grip," the 18-year-old Calderon said in Filipino.

Calderon also lost to Arsen Eraliev of Kyrgyztan, 3-0, in the preliminary round but made it to the medal round after Eraliev advanced to the finals against Iran's Kousa Muhammadmehdi.

The gold-medal match was still being fought at presstime.

"I knew I could take him (Azkenov) but I lost strength after too much grappling and shoving in the second round," said Calderon, a member of the national training pool for the past two years.

The son of a construction worker from Las Piñas City admitted that the technique of both Azkenov and Eraliev were superior.

"Our opponents are strong, but my wards will go down fighting," said RP wrestling coach Jerry Faingason. "This is a good opportunity for them to strengthen their skills."

A plus METRO

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Editor Ester G. Dipasupil

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Father arrested for 3-year-old's murder

Mall surveillance camera printouts lead probers to suspect in daughter's slay

By Kristine L. Alave

THE FATHER OF A 3-YEAR-OLD GIRL HAS BEEN TAGGED BY THE police as the primary suspect in her murder.

The girl was found in a man-made ditch in Pasig City early this week.

Eastern Police District director Chief Supt. Luizo Ticman arrested yesterday Jayson Noriega, 22, of Block 27 Lot 13 Phase 1A Kasiglahan, Rodriguez, Rizal.

The girl went missing on June 28. She was found floating in a ditch on Meralco Avenue, Pasig two days later. The girl had a stab wound in her left chest. Her skull was also broken, a police report said.

Dr. Emmanuel Aranas of the EPD Crime Laboratory said there was no evidence that the girl was sexually abused.

In an interview, Ticman said the suspect "confessed" to investigators.

The suspect underwent a drug test to determine if he was under the influence of illegal drugs during the incident.

Police investigators showed Noriega printouts taken from a mall's surveillance cameras. Noriega and his live-in partner Rizalyn Tagoboc were shown with two children entering SM Centerpoint at about 8:34 p.m. on June 28.

At 9:02 p.m. Noriega was shown leaving the mall with a child, who was clinging to him. Another photograph showed the foot of a little girl. The camera caught Noriega at 9:05 p.m. entering the mall again but he was already alone, Ticman said.

Ticman said Noriega was separated from the girl's mother.

The EPD chief said the suspect admitted he got irritated by the girl's crying. "I didn't know what got into me. She didn't want to stop crying," he told police.

Noriega admitted to authorities that he gave the girl to a yet unidentified companion when he left the mall.

Ticman said they are investigating the whereabouts of the suspect's companion known only as "Ugo."

Ownership of gun found beside dead trader still a puzzler

By Kristine L. Alave

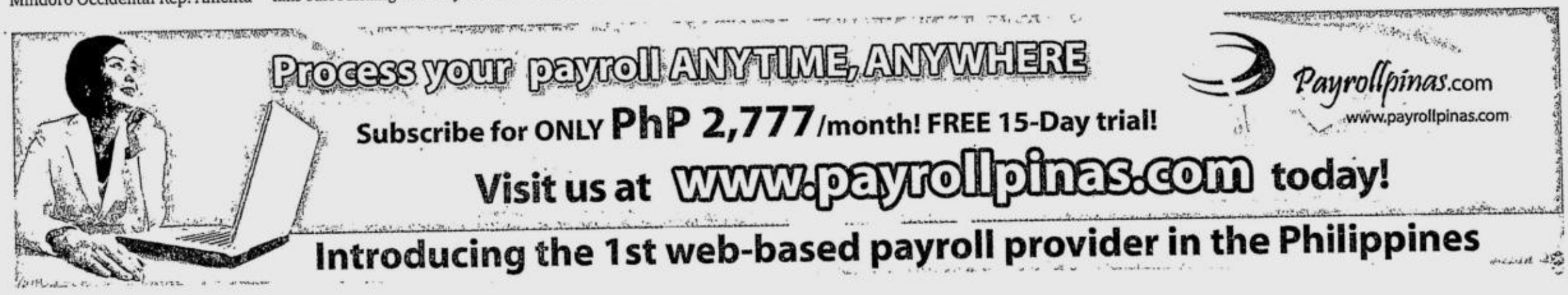
THE EASTERN POLICE DISTRICT (EPD) is tracing the ownership of the pistol found near the body of Jose Reyes, son-in-law of Mindoro Occidental Rep. Amelita Villarosa. EPD director Chief Supt. Luizo Ticman said the information would help them determine if Reyes killed himself or if foul play was involved.

But he was mum on other details surrounding the 43-year-old businessman's death. He refused to say if the .9 mm pistol found near the body was the gun that killed Reyes. The crime laboratory has yet to release its findings.

Reyes, a Makati resident, was discovered dead at about 9:30 p.m. Wednesday inside P-59 at the fourth floor of Valle Verde Mansion in Capt. Henry Javier Street, Brgy. Oranbo, Pasig City, an apparent suicide, police said.

But Pasig City police chief Sr.

OWNER/A21



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'Little Vietnam': Goodbye to all that

By Tina G. Santos

MANILA MAYOR ALFREDO LIM yesterday instructed policemen to make sure that residents of Quiapo's notorious "Little Vietnam" would not go back and rebuild their homes in the area.

Lim, who went to the area to oversee the demolition of shanties yesterday morning, directed police to watch and secure the area which gained notoriety because of cases of killings and alleged illegal drug activities.

As early as 5 a.m., hundreds of heavily armed policemen, including members of the Manila Police District Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) and Explosives and Ordnance Division (EOD), were deployed in the area to keep the peace.

"The demolition was very peaceful," said MPD acting director Senior Supt. Danilo Abarzosa. "There was no resistance from the residents because they were informed beforehand and they probably understand that this is for their own good."

Police, however, found drug paraphernalia in the area during the demolition.

Lim gave the go-signal for the eviction of informal settlers after a dialogue with religious and barangay leaders.

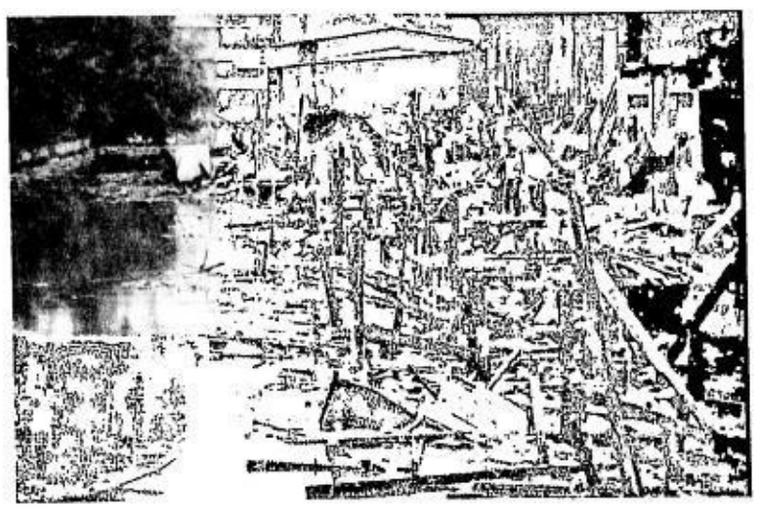
The mayor said he already relocated settlers of "Little Vietnam" during his earlier term as mayor. He claimed that the demolition would not only help in the drive against crime but also improve the image of the Muslim community nearby.

The area along Arlegui Street got its tag in the 1970s during the Vietnam War.

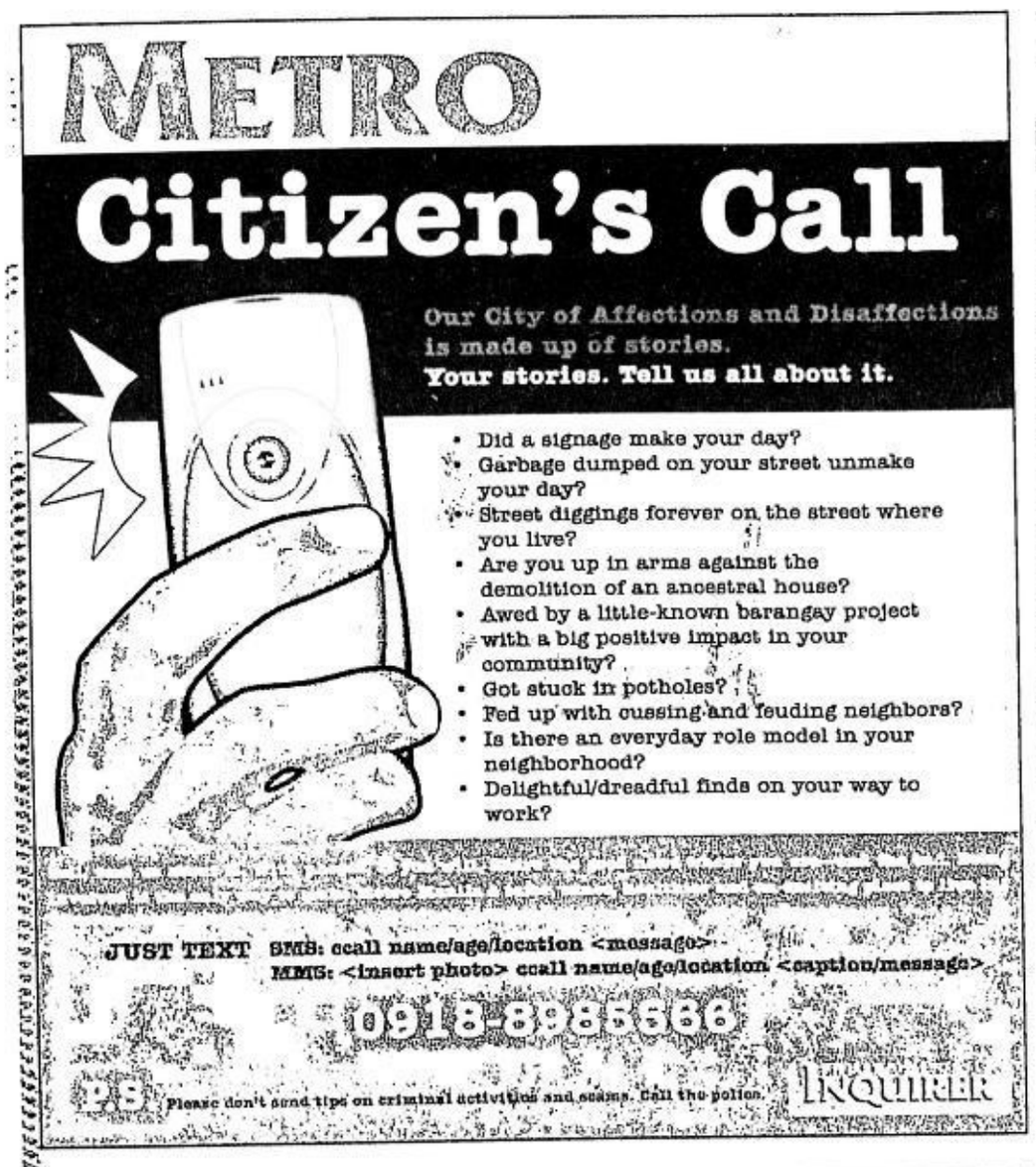
"Little Vietnam" gained media attention last month following the discovery of the bodies of two women in a drum filled with cement. The victims were stabbed to death; the killings were reportedly drug-related.

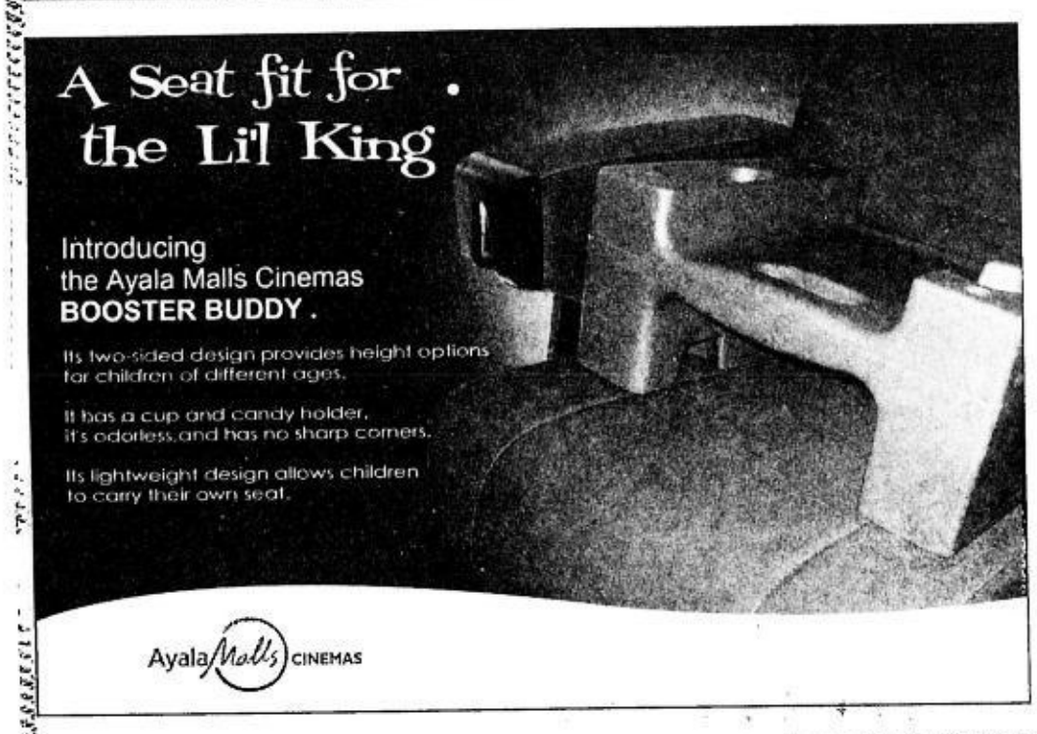
Lim said victims of summary executions may have been dumped into a creek nearby.

The mayor said he has asked the Philippine Navy, the Coast Guard and the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority to help clean the waterway to see if more bodies were dumped there.



PEACE and quiet for once after shanties were torn down yesterday at Quiapo's notorious "Little Vietnam." REM ZAMORA





Lawyer allegedly helped client escape

By Margaux C. Ortiz

A QUEZON CITY JUDGE HAS FILED a criminal complaint against a lawyer for allegedly helping his client escape immediately after the promulgation of the latter's drug case.

Judge Ma. Theresa dela Torre-Yadao of the QC Regional Trial Court Branch 80, said Marcelino P. Arias violated Article 156 of the Revised Penal Code when he helped his client Rey Llanos avoid serving his sentence.

Under Article 156, a person may be imprisoned for helping a detainee escape.

In the complaint filed in the Quezon City Prosecutor's Office on Thursday afternoon, Yadao said that on May 24 Llanos and Efren Mascarinas were convicted of drug peddling.

Both were sentenced to life imprisonment and ordered to pay a fine of P500,000 each.

As the court personnel prepared the necessary commitment order for the transfer of the two to the Bureau of Corrections, Arias "led or escorted the said accused outside of the courtroom, taking advantage of the lapses of the court personnel and jail guards posted near the door."

"Atty. Arias, who knew full well that accused Llanos was already under the custody of court after the cancellation of his bail, helped him escape and evade the service of his sentence," Yadao said in her complaint.

Arrest warrant

The judge said she had issued a warrant for Llanos' arrest.

Court clerk Segundina Fuertes said, in an attached affidavit, that she saw Arias, with his right arm around Llanos' shoulder, walking toward the door.

Ronnie Jaboni, court process server, said he noticed that Llanos was no longer in the courtroom when he returned to his post.

"I rushed to the lobby of the justice hall and outside the building to look for him but he was no longer there," Jaboni added in his affidavit.

METROBRIEFS

Bogus car theft

A COMPANY employee is now facing perjury charges for reporting a bogus car theft to the Quezon City police last month. QCPD director Senior Supt. Magtanggol Gatdula said Fabian Santos, an employee of Garmas, Inc., had pawned his company car to a casino financier, according to a report sent to Mayor Feliciano Belmonte. Santos later filed a fabricated complaint saying his company's blue Toyota Revo was stolen. Santos had reported to the QCPD Anti-Carnapping Section last June 8 that the car was stolen while parked in a lot along Austria Street, Novaliches, Quezon City around 9:30 p.m. the day before. "It turned out that the car was pawned to Mike Reyes, a financier of Casino Filipino in Parañaque City, in the amount of P230,000," Gatdula said. Reyes voluntarily turned over the Toyota Revo to the police, he added. Santos told the police that he had made it appear the car was stolen for fear that his employer would take legal action against him. *Margaux C. Ortiz*

A first in Navotas

NAVOTAS CITY recorded its first car robbery incident for the year. A newly-bought luxury vehicle parked in front of the house of a businessman along M. Naval Street in the city was reported stolen by its owner between 2 a.m. and 6 a.m. on Thursday. Derek Go, 32, of M. Naval, Navotas East told police that his newly-bought Mitsubishi Pajero with plate number RDE-983 was stolen in front of his house. Alarmed by the incident, city's chief of police Supt. Eric Reyes said, he had ordered an intensified anticriminality and police visibility ventures to avoid a repeat of the crime. Investigators said they are now working overtime to maintain the low crime rate in the city. For the second straight year, the Navotas City police station was named as the "Best Municipal Police Station" by the PNP Police Community Relations Office. *Nancy Carvajal*

Valle Verde Club Mass

HOLY Mass is now being celebrated at the Valle Verde Club, Capt. Henry Javier Street, near Ultra in Pasig City, every Sunday, at 9 a.m. The Holy Mass is part of The Feast, which is participated in by some 1,000 Catholics every week at Valle Verde Country Club. The feast also includes a lively worship, talk on practical application of the Gospel by Preacher in Blue Jeans Bo Sanchez, and a healing session. For details, call Chelle Crisanto at 411-7876, 726-8951 or 726-3929.

Carmen Soriano charged with estafa for bad checks

By Julie M. Aurelio and Santiago R. Alcantara

FORMER SINGER AND ACTRESS Carmen Soriano is facing estafa charges for allegedly issuing six bouncing checks to pay her debts to a friend.

Soriano was charged with six counts of violation of the Anti-Bouncing Check Law or BP 22, according to a complaint filed yesterday morning in the office of Parañaque City prosecutor Leonardo Rodriguez Jr.

If found guilty, Soriano could face up to six years imprisonment. She could also be ordered to pay the amount of P310,500.

Irma Alonto and her son Sherwin Tanedo said the singer issued bouncing checks amounting to P310,500 to cover her debts.

"The checks were issued in February this year, but my clients found out that funds were insufficient to cover the amount," Vincent Romarate, lawyer for Alonto, said.

Soriano is the mother of actor Lloyd Samartino who stars in the ABS-CBN drama "Walang Kapalit."

Asked for comment, Samartino said he had not spoken to his mother since he received a text message yesterday morning from somebody who heard the story on the radio. Samartino said his mother was not taking calls because she was not feeling well.

"As far as I know, it's really a misunderstanding between two parties," the actor said.

Romarate said Alonto was a good friend of Soriano. He said Soriano first began borrowing cash from Alonto and her son in 2004. The singer was a good borrower at first, he added. But the relationship soured when Soriano's payments became less frequent.

The lawyer alleged that Soriano issued six Metrobank checks amounting to P310,500 in February, but it was only in April when Alonto and her son discovered that the checks bounced. After months of negotiations, mother and son decided to sue Soriano.

Samartino said Alonto was his mother's *mahjong* friend. "They always asked my mom to join them because every time she played, she would bring along players who were moneyed and influential," he said.

Samartino said their celebrity status was one of the reasons why the case was brought to the media.

What's the matter with Sergio Apostol?

ON TARGE

Ramon Tulf

ONE OF THE DISADVANTAGES OF A non-lawyer president is that he (or she) can't tell whether he (she) is getting the best legal advice.

And since President Macapagal-Arroyo is not a lawyer, she's not getting the best possible advice from her legal advisers.

Consider what Presidential Legal Counsel Sergio Apostol had to say about the possible penalty Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV might get for leading hundreds of soldiers in the 2003 Oakwood mutiny.

Apostol said the Navy lieutenant-turned-politician might just get a slap on the wrist if he pleaded guilty to the charges and apologized to Ms Arroyo.

Susmaryosep, Lolo Sergio, what in the world is the matter with you!

Why should a man charged with a heinous crime, for which there is no bail, get off with a light penalty even if he pleaded guilty?

Why should the Oakwood mutineers get off with a light penalty if they apologized to Ms Arroyo?

They didn't commit a crime against Ms Arroyo but to the entire nation.

Apostol's colleagues in Malacañang are right. He should be asked to retire.

* * *

Should Trillanes be allowed to attend Senate sessions?

My lawyer friends, who are much younger than Apostol, argue that the same legal principle that applied to former Zamboanga del Norte Rep. Romeo Jalosjos should apply to Trillanes.

Jalosjos was not allowed to attend sessions at the House of Representatives while his conviction for raping a minor was on appeal.

To the argument that Trillanes has not yet been convicted, the reply is that Jalosjos' conviction was not yet final when he was representing his constituents in Zamboanga del Norte.

Moreover, Trillanes is charged before a civilian court and a military court.

Because of this, he should remain under military jurisdiction.

My lawyer friends point out that in Abadilla v. Ramos, the Supreme Court ruled that "a military officer who was dropped from the roll of officers cannot and should not lead to the conclusion that he is beyond the jurisdiction of the military authorities."

And in Domingo v. the Minister of National Defense, the high court declared that "the petitioner is a person subject to military law facing charges before a general court martial, and his release from confinement pending the trial of the charges against him is a matter that lies largely in the discretion of the military authorities."

In short, Trillanes should remain in detention at the Marine brig (jail) inside Fort Bonifacio even if he's already a senator.

* * *

About 300 residents of Cabesas Village in Trece Martires City, Cavite were hospitalized because of a dysentery outbreak.

The culprit? Contaminated drinking water.

If we don't watch out, Metro Manila could be next since water in some parts of the metropolis has been found to be contaminated.

* * *

What's wrong with that newspaper ad, supposedly paid for by the presidential adviser on overseas Filipino workers, advising the citizenry to keep calm after the verdict on deposed President Erap comes out?

Even the headline of the full-page ad is very clear and self-explanatory: "Erap, Guilty or Not Guilty? Kailangan Bang May Gulo (Is there need for trouble)?"

The ad is addressed to both the pro-Erap and the anti-Erap camps.

It calls on both camps to keep cool should the verdict be adverse to them.

* * *

"Fruitgame" machines, similar to the ones in the casino, have replaced "video *karera*" or horse-racing as an illegal game played by school children playing hooky.

Fruitgame is rampant in Laguna, Batangas, Nueva Ecija, Baguio and Pangasinan.

Needless to say, it enjoys protection from some members of the police force.

Dance of the nine virgins a yearly tradition in Makati

By Julie M. Aurelio

THE NINE DANCERS IN LONG PINK DRESSES were unmindful of the heat of the mid-morning sun.

As they danced and sang their prayers to the Virgen de la Rosa, one of the patron saints of Barangay Poblacion in Makati City, they tried to ignore the audience

In this barangay, the yearly prayer through dance and song is both an act of penance and thanksgiving done by nine highly-esteemed dancers or *mananayaw*.

Known as the *baile de los arcos* (dance of the arches), the dance is performed on June 29 and 30, feast days of the Poblacion's patron saints Peter and Paul and the Virgin of the Rose or Virgen de la Rosa.

Devotion to the Virgen de la Rosa began in 1718 when a Jesuit priest brought the image of the Virgen from Acapulco to the Sts. Peter and Paul Church in Poblacion.

But not just any girl can join the yearly *baile*, whose origins are unknown even to oldtimers.

"The dancer must be beautiful inside and out. She must be sincere in doing the penance because she will undergo rigorous training for the baile," says Edna Samarista, whose mother and sister were once dancers in the baile.

In the old days, fair-skinned girls of good reputation (not necessarily from rich families) were picked as dancers.

Not enough

But an unblemished reputation, physical beauty and heartfelt desire to do the dance prayer are not enough. One of the requirements for any dancer, says the 76-year-old Samarista, is to be a virgin.

"*Dapat* virgin. *Kapag may nobyo, tinatanong kung may nangyari na ba. At saka dapat mataas ang boses ng mananayaw,*" she adds. (The dancer has to be a virgin. If she has a boyfriend, nothing beyond courtship should have transpired between the two of them. She should also be able to reach the high notes)

The reason behind the "virginity requirement" is that the nine dancers pray and give thanks to Jesus Christ's mother, who is a virgin. Some of the old folks even believe that if there is heavy rainfall on the day of the feast, it means one of the dancers lied about being a virgin.

Pledge

Samarista was pledged by her mother to become a dancer, but was rejected because she couldn't hit the high notes and was a bit dark-skinned in her youth.

The dancers are usually aged 14 and above. The oldest now is in her mid-20s. Most of them had mothers, grandmothers and great-grandmothers who were also dancers.

"It's been our tradition to pass on the dance to the next generation," says Samarista. The family in charge—or *encargada*—of teaching the dance are the Venturas and Atilons of Brgy. Poblacion.

The present *encargada*, Linda Atilon-Reyes, was a former *capitana* or lead dancer.

Girls wanting to become part of the *baile* are screened as early as two years before the event. Training for the dance begins in April. The nine girls are taught the turns, bows, and twists passed down for more than a hundred years.

The *baile de los arcos* is performed at the plaza in front of the Sts. Peter and Paul Church.

Atilon-Reyes says there are three parts to the *baile*—the *diccho* or simultaneous chanting of prayers, the *trono* or singing of prayer, and the *baile*, a combination of prayer, dance and song.

The audience can "join" in the penance by praying intently with the dancers, Samarista says.

Clapping or hooting at the end of the two-hour prayer-dance is a big no-no, even for tourists who want to show their appreciation.

"It's not for entertainment. It's not for the people who are watching. The dance is for patrons alone," points out Dwane Samarista, Edna's nephew and *kagawad* for education and culture.

Both Samaristas note that local interest in and awareness of the *baile de los arcos* had diminished over the years. Girls no longer want to join the *baile*, and are setting their sights on beauty pageants.

But Dwane says the *baile* will go on even if there is no one left to watch. "Whether or not there is an audience, the *baile* must go on As long as the present generation passes on the tradition, it will remain part of our heritage," says Dwane.

This year, Atilon-Reyes' own niece, Michelle Atilon, was *capitana*.

DANCERS of the *baile de los arcos* must be beautiful inside and out, according to longtime participants. RODEL ROTONI

Former PNB employee charged with P2M theft

By Margaux C. Ortiz

A FORMER EMPLOYEE OF A PHILIPPINE NAtional Bank branch in Quezon City is facing charges of qualified theft after allegedly withdrawing more than P2 million pesos from the account of a depositor.

Silverio Fernandez, manager of the PNB NIA branch, filed yesterday the charges against Reino Antonio Salvoro in the Quezon City Prosecutor's Office.

Fernandez alleged Salvoro, who worked at the PNB Delta branch as remittance analyst, had been absent without leave since April 8, 2003.

In his complaint, the bank manager said Angeles Gumabon, a depositor, and her two daughters Anna Marie and Anna Rose, had eight passbooks under a joint account with the bank.

On April 14, 2003, Anna Marie tried to withdraw P2 million from four of their accounts. But Fernandez said they found out that the accounts were either closed or linked to another client or did not exist in the Dimension International System (DIS). Moreover, records were also missing.

Anna Marie was asked to defer her withdrawal. She returned two days later with the four other passbooks with a total deposit balance of P627,739.14 for verification and updating. Again, bank officials discovered that the accounts had been closed.

Fernandez said an investigation showed that Salvoro withdrew the amounts and closed the accounts.

Fernandez added that the bank was compelled to restore P2,489,813.64 to the Gumabon family after Anna Marie wanted to withdraw the amount on May 23, 2003.

Owner of . . . From page A19

Supt. Frank Uyami said they were not ruling out the possibility that Reyes was a victim of foul play.

Police said Reyes' body was discovered by his friend businessman Bernard de Venecia, the unit's owner. The victim had a single gunshot wound on the neck just below the chin.

A black Zig-Zauer .9 mm pistol with serial number B260185 and with one loaded magazine was recovered from the crime scene. A slug was recovered inside a pillow on top of Reyes' head.

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The Italian love affair with coffee

IN ITALY, COFFEE IS THE NATIVE BREAKFAST, and no one rushes off to work or goes about one's business for the day before first having a cuppa. Espresso or Italian coffee was born in this land of coffee lovers. Italy is a country of coffee aficionados that will not tolerate an establishment that serves bad coffee.

What makes good coffee? It's in the beans. And in the preparation. To make great coffee it takes a master to blend and roast the beans properly. Italian coffees use the Arabica beans known for their full flavor and low caffeine content.

But believe it or not, a full bodied Italian espresso is lower in caffeine than a cup of brewed coffee even if it has a richer, fuller flavor! This is because it is prepared using the pressure method where there is less contact time between the coffee and the water. A cup of espresso contains, on average, just 78 mg. of caffeine while a brewed cup averages 120 mg!

ILIJA Naumovski

The Segafredo Zanetti group is Italy's biggest name in coffee. The history of the international Segafredo Zanetti business is the history of the family of Massimo Zanetti who established the company in Italy in 1973.

The coffee beans from which the unique Segafredo coffee is made do not grow on one coffee bush alone. The creators of the harmonious coffee blend carefully select cultivation areas so that the end result is the best coffee there is in every respect. The perfect balance of the coffee's flavor is carefully monitored and the roasting, grinding and packaging process ensures that all the aroma and elegance of the coffee blend is intact.

What makes Segafredo Zanertti coffee very special is that Segafredo is the only coffee company in the world that can guarantee the exquisiteness of its coffee from point of origin to the final cup. Segafredo Zanetti is a completely integrated company, from its own plantations in Costa Rica and the Fazenda Nossa Senhora da Guia in Brazil -- the largest coffee plantation in the world! - through to its green coffee trading, on to its state of the art roasting facilities in Italy, Austria, Finland, France, The Netherlands and Polonia., and finally to thousands of coffee shops and millions of consumers in over 200 franchised Coffee Boutiques in 100 countries all over the world, including the Philippines.

No wonder Segafredo Zanetti, is fired up with the mission to spread Italian coffee culture to the rest of the world.

Discover excellent Italian coffee and the romance of a drink that dates back to Europe's Renaissance era at Segafredo stores at Greenbelt 2 in Makati, the 2nd Floor of the Podium in Ortigas Center and at its newest outlet at the IBank Building in Greenhills along Ortigas Avenue near corner Wilson.

For more information about Italian coffee and Segafredo, call 892-5011 or visit www.segafredo.it. For franchise queries, e-mail eifajardo@libertygroup.com.

The Linden Suites awards front office associate

THE LINDEN SUITES recently cited Crissy Maloles, a front office associate of the hotel, for best exemplifying Service Excellence, one of TLS' most vital corporate values. The Service Excellence Award is shown being awarded by the hotel's general manager Alfred M. Reyes (right) to Maloles (left) along with a gift certificate for a complimentary overnight stay in a One-Bedroom Suite with free masseuse service and breakfast for two, one sack of rice and an Azzurro Bistro & Bar gift certificate. The Linden Suites acknowledges that its most valuable asset is its people. This is why the hotel makes it a point to regularly commend employees who have performed exceptionally well, some of who even go beyond the call of duty in their efforts to satisfy guests.

Tony Roma's caters for any occasion

TONY ROMA'S TAKES THE HASSLE OUT OF PLANNING YOUR NEXT PARTY! Whether it is a business luncheon, company function or just getting together with friends or colleagues, hosting your party at Tony Roma's guarantees your guests a great time with our friendly service and mouthwatering dishes. With an extensive a la carte menu, set meals or party platters available to suit your budget, we are confident of cooking up a meal that satisfies everybody. Thinking of having your party at home or in the office? Tony Roma's can help too by catering a menu to suit your specific needs. This will be a great option for guests who want to throw a party away from Tony Roma's, but still want the great Tony Roma's food experience. To have a party at Tony Roma's or away from our restaurant, please contact our restaurant manager for details. Call Ground Floor, Glorietta 4, Ayala Center, Makati City Tel: 757-1925 and 757-1926, 2nd Floor, Expansion Wing, Alabang Town Center, Muntinlupa City Tel: 771-1388 and 771-1788

A symphony of sandwich classics

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AT CAFÉ ASTORIA, THIS RAINY MONTH OF JULY IS ABOUT THE appropriate time to create a relaxed atmosphere and restful setting coupled with an interesting selection of merienda treats guaranteed to enhance your afternoon delights and conversations. Prepared to be a feast for the eyes, aromatic and flavorful at the same time, the selection of dishes will have your cozy senses craving for more! A delicious medley of pasta and pizza, the creative sandwiches such as Submarine and Burger for the Big Boys are just a few of the flavorsome array to expect. Luscious desserts will likewise ensure guests savor each delightable bite. Don't miss it and take pleasure in the flavors of Café Astoria's afternoon delights. The lunch buffet is likewise available Mondays through Sundays from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Astoria Plaza is located at #15 J. Escriva Drive, Ortigas Business District, Pasig City. For inquiries and reservations call 687-1111 or visit www.astoriaplaza.com Astoria Plaza is managed with distinction by Genesis Hotels and Resorts Corp.

Movie weekends with the Malayan Plaza

WEEKENDS HAVE NEVER BEEN THIS relaxing and fun-filled at the Malayan Plaza. From July 6 to Sept. 30, guests can avail of the hotel's special weekend promotions. Booking for two nights in a 1-bedroom unit for P7,777 includes free movie tickets for two at the Podium Cinema and daily breakfast for two at the newly opened Q Bistro starting on July 10. Availing of the two nights' stay in a 2-bedroom unit for P9,999 gives the guests four free movie tickets and daily breakfast for four. This package also includes complimentary bottled water, local newspaper and free use of the Health Club facilities and swimming pool. Applicable on Friday and Saturday nights only, the rates are inclusive of 10 percent service charge and prevailing government taxes and are valid only for local residents and foreigners with ACR. Late check-out is up to 4 p.m., though subject to room availability.

Located at the heart of the Ortigas Commercial District, the Malayan Plaza offers furnished units that easily combine aesthetic values, comfort and functionality. Apart from featuring stylish interiors, Malayan Plaza units are also equipped with complete living, dining and kitchen facilities. Other attractions include: cable network television, NDD/IDD telephones, individually controlled air-conditioning, hot and cold water, in-room video intercom, broad band internet access in the room, helipad, swimming pool, open-air whirl pool, gym, game room, mini-golf putting green, children's playground and playroom, housekeeping/laundry/concierge services, and 24-hour security. For reservations and bookings, call The Malayan Plaza at 706-0055 or check out their website: www.themalayanplazahotel.com

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Broken promise over US green cards prompts suit

THE AMERICAN IMMIGRATION Lawyers Association said Thursday that it would bring a class-action lawsuit against the US immigration agency for refusing to accept thousands of applications for work-based permanent visas from highly-skilled immigrants who were encouraged by the government to apply.

According to accounts Thursday by officials and lawyers, the immigrants were caught in a confrontation between the two federal bodies that control the immigration system—the State Department and the US Citizenship and Immigration Services.

The hopes of thousands of foreigners who have been working legally in the United States were unexpectedly raised and then abruptly dashed as a result of the disagreement. They had responded last month to an announcement that permanent residency visas would be available, but on Monday learned there were none.

Federal officials said a misunderstanding had arisen from an effort by both agencies to reduce huge backlogs of applications for permanent residence visas, known as green cards.

Immigration officials acknowledged that the effort was poorly handled. "Was there a lack of communication between us and the State Department?" said William G. Wright, a spokesman for the immigration agency. "Certainly."

The episode started on June 12, when the State Department announced in a monthly bulletin that green cards would be available starting July 2 for applicants across the range of high-skilled categories. That was a signal to immigrants who have been working in this country on temporary visas that they would be able to apply to become permanent residents.

Thousands of immigrants rushed to obtain certified documents, assemble employer sponsorship papers, take medical examinations and dispatch their applications. Many canceled travel plans so they could be in the United States when their applications arrived on July 2, as the law required.

But on Monday, the State Department announced that no more green cards were available. Snared in the turnabout were well-educated, highly skilled legal immigrants, many of them doctors and medical technicians, with long work experience in the United States. All had obtained federal certification that no American workers were available for the jobs they hold. NYT

31 bodies recovered from bus mudslide

ELOXOCHITLAN, MEXICO—Mexican rescuers dug out the bodies of 31 people on Thursday and searched for dozens more believed killed when part of a rain-soaked mountain collapsed on a bus carrying up to 60 passengers.

About 500 soldiers and rescue workers labored with pick-axes and shovels and used dogs to find the victims, hit by the mudslide on a remote road near the mountain town of Eloxochitlan in the southern state of Puebla.

Rescuers also used bulldozers and other heavy machinery to claw away boulders, dirt and trees to reach the bus, which was buried under some seven meters of mud after the hillside collapsed early on Wednesday.

"We don't expect to find anyone alive," local government spokesman Javier Lopez said in the state capital Puebla.

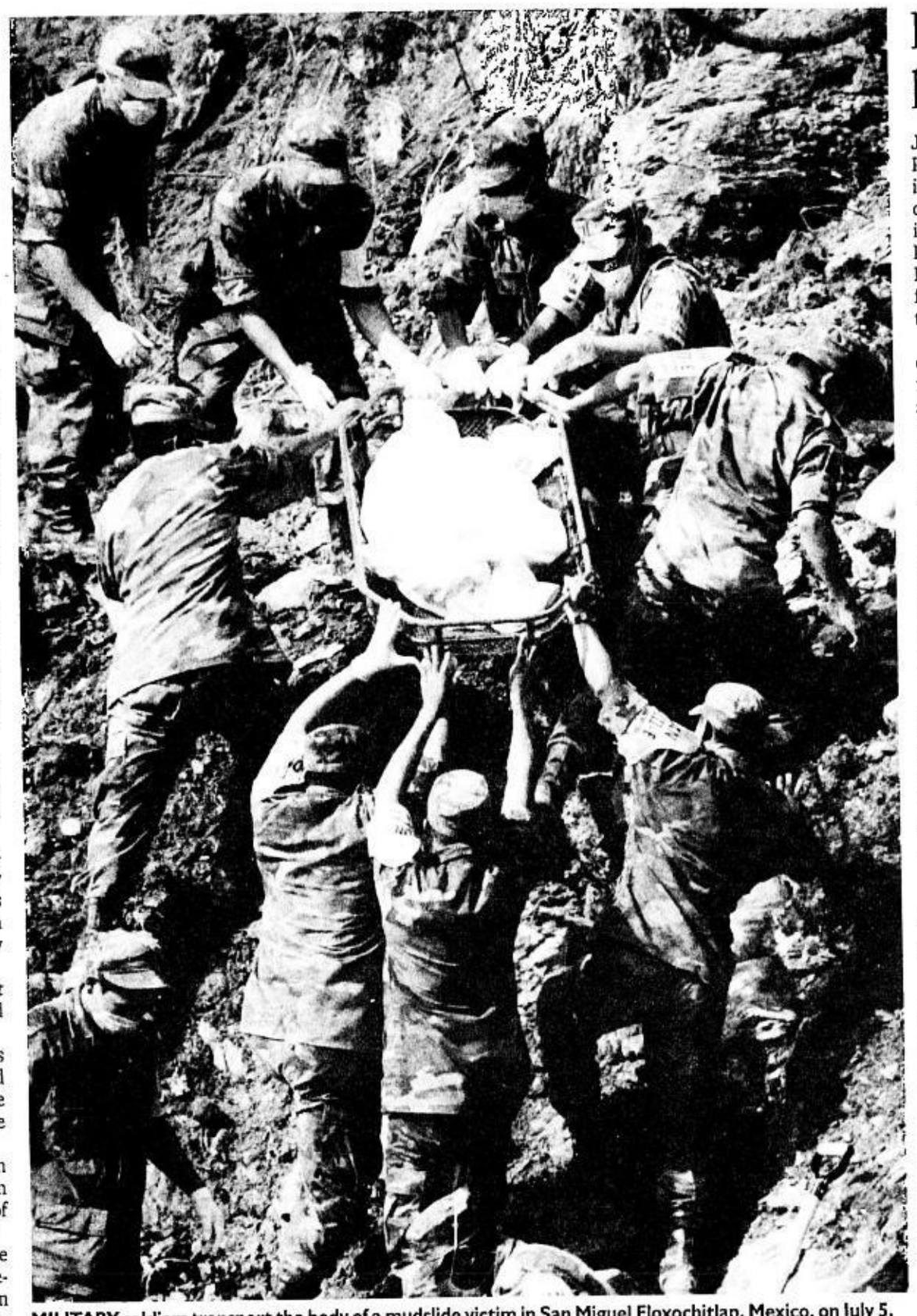
The corpses of at least four children were pulled out as emergency workers dug up crumpled chunks of the bus, which was crushed on a winding road about 1.6 km below the tiny village of Zacacuapan.

Villagers heard the landslide but only realized what had happened when the bus failed to arrive.

"We got down there and it was all covered up and we realized something had happened because the bus never arrived," said coffee grower Benito Cortes.

Rescuers were hampered on Thursday by the flattened condition of the bus and concerns that more of the sodden hillside could give way.

"The part of the bus they are working on is completely destroyed," Puebla Gov. Mario Marin said, adding that rescue workers would keep digging until they reached the last body. *Reuters*



MILITARY soldiers transport the body of a mudslide victim in San Miguel Eloxochitlan, Mexico, on July 5. Rescuers digging through mud and rocks have recovered at least 31 bodies from a bus carrying 40 to 60 passengers which was buried on a rural road after a mountainside gave way on July 4. AP

Israel offensive in Gaza leaves 11 Palestinians dead

JERUSALEM—AT LEAST 11 Palestinian militants were killed in air strikes and armed clashes during an Israeli army incursion into central Gaza on Thursday, Palestinian medical officials said. It was one of the bloodiest days for Hamas since it took control of the Gaza Strip three weeks ago.

Hamas officials said that seven of the dead were members of its military wing, known as the Qassam Brigades, mostly men in their early 20s. The Islamic Jihad faction said one of its men was among the dead. The affiliation of the other three was not clear.

Israeli military officials described the raid as a routine operation to root out "terrorist infrastructures" and search for weapons and wanted men. Israel's Army Radio reported that dozens of Palestinians suspected of involvement in terrorism were being questioned in Gaza.

But Hamas officials accused Israel of trying to provoke an escalation of the conflict after a few days of relative quiet on the Gaza-Israel border. A Hamas spokesperson, Sami Abu Zuhri, said the incursion was "an Israeli plan to end the resistance and to shake the government, despite its successes and achievements."

He was referring to the deposed Hamas-led government of Ismail Haniya, which was fired by the Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, of the rival Fatah faction, after Hamas' violent conquest of Gaza. Abbas appointed an emergency government to operate from the West Bank, but the Hamas leadership holds sway in Gaza and is trying to prove that it can impose order there.

Two squads of armed Palestinians were hit from the air as they were spotted approaching the ground forces, and five more armed Palestinians were hit in exchanges of fire on the ground, the army spokesperson said.

Dr. Muawiya Hassanein, director of the emergency medical service in Gaza, said 25 Palestinians had been wounded.

One of the wounded Palestinians was a cameraman for the Al Aksa satellite television station who was filming the clashes. Al-Jazeera television showed videotape of the cameraman lying wounded on the ground, then being shot twice in the legs from afar. *NYT*

After 6 months in Muslim rehab, woman still wants to be a Hindu

SHAH ALAM, MALAYSIA—A Muslim-born Malaysian woman who was held at an Islamic rehabilitation center for six months because she tried to live as a Hindu insisted Friday she will never return to her original faith.

The Islamic Religious Department in southern Malacca state detained Revathi Masoosai, an ethnic Indian, in January and sent her for religious counseling after officials discovered she had married a Hindu man despite being born to a Muslim family.

Revathi was released from the rehabilitation center Thursday, and she appeared in a High Court on Friday in an attempt to have her detention declared illegal.

Revathi, 29, claimed officials at the center tried to make her pray as a Muslim, wear a head scarf and eat beef, but she refused.

"Because of their behavior, I loathe Islam even more now," she told reporters. "They say it's a school, but it's actually a prison."

Tuah Atan, a lawyer representing the Islamic department, said Revathi seemed to have become "so obsessed with love" after meeting her husband, but he said officials remain hopeful that she might still return to Islam.

Revathi was born to Indian Muslim parents who gave her a Muslim name, Siti Fatimah. But she claims she was raised as a Hindu by her grandmother and changed her name in 2001.

Revathi married Suresh Veerappan in 2004 according to Hindu rites and gave birth to a daughter in December 2005. But the marriage was not legally registered because under Malaysian law Suresh would have had to convert to Islam first. Revathi's official identification documents state she is a Muslim because Malaysians who are born as Muslims are legally barred from changing religion.

Islamic officials seized the couple's 18-month-old daughter from Suresh in March and handed the child to Revathi's Muslim mother.

Revathi said officials have ordered her to live with her mother and her baby for now and to continue undergoing counseling. *AP*

French investigators raid former PM's home

PARIS—FRENCH INVESTIGATORS raided the home of former prime minister Dominique de Villepin on Thursday after fresh evidence came to light in a dirty tricks scandal targeting President Nicolas Sarkozy.

Judges looking into the so-called Clearstream affair were following up new evidence that Villepin may have sought to defame Sarkozy and scupper his bid for the presidency, justice officials said.

"It's the logical next step," one source close to the investigation said.

Judges Jean-Marie d'Huy and Henri Pons visited Villepin's flat in a fashionable part of the 17th arrondissement in Paris late afternoon, accompanied by police and a representative of the prosecutor's office, and conducted a six-and-a-half hour search of the premises.

The new evidence against Villepin was widely leaked to the press earlier Thursday and is based on documents retrieved from the computer of retired intelligence chief Philippe Rondot.

These appear to back up claims that in 2004 Villepin encouraged the leaking of information falsely implicating Sarkozy, then interior minister, in a financial scandal, justice officials said.

The documents also suggest Villepin was acting with the clear support of then president Jacques Chirac.

Both Villepin and Chirac have denied involvement in the affair, which revolves around a fake list of account-holders at the Clearstream bank of Luxembourg who supposedly benefited from illegal commissions from arms sales.

Judges in charge of the investigation are looking into allegations that Villepin and Chirac may have tried to secretly publicize the list to wreck Sarkozy's presidential hopes. His relationship with the two was at the time under great strain.

Chirac, who handed over power to Sarkozy in May, has refused to speak to the judges, arguing that in this matter he is still covered by presidential immunity.

Villepin, who also left office in May, on Thursday denounced the new "untruthful allegations." *AFP*

Heat wave broils US West

BOISE, IDAHO—SWELTERING RESIDENTS across the West headed for lakes and rivers, seeking relief from high temperatures expected to set records through at least Friday.

Some office workers were given the option to float on innertubes down the Boise River instead of sitting at stuffy desks, with temperatures in Boise reaching 40 °C Thursday afternoon. Forecasters predicted a high of 42 °C on Friday—six degrees higher than the 38 °C record for that date set in 1985.

"Once it gets that high—105, 107, 109 °F—it just feels hot," said Rick Overton, a copywriter who arranged the float trip for the digital marketing firm Wirestone. "I'm going to keep a tube under my desk for the whole summer and whenever it gets this hot I'm going to escape."

But temperatures in part of the West were climbing so high that authorities warned residents of southern Nevada, southeastern California and northwestern Arizona that outdoor activities could be dangerous except during the cooler early morning hours. Phoenix reached 46 °C; Baker, California, reached 52 °C.

A 1-year-old boy was found dead Wednesday evening in a locked car in temperatures approaching 38 °C in Orofino, Idaho. He was locked in the car for about five hours when passers-by noticed him, and the boy's step-grandmother was charged in his death, authorities said Thursday. *AP*

Poisoned shake closest CIA bid to kill Castro

HAVANA—THE CLOSEST THE CIA CAME TO killing Cuba's Fidel Castro was a 1963 attempt with a poison pill delivered by American mobsters that was to be slipped into a chocolate milkshake, a former Cuban intelligence chief said.

But the capsule stuck to the freezer where it was hidden in the cafeteria of the Havana Libre (ex-Hilton) Hotel and ripped open when the would-be assassin waiter went to get the poison.

"That moment was the closest the CIA got to assassinating Fidel," retired state security general Fabian Escalante told Reuters in an interview this week.

Castro, who seized power in a 1959 revolution that turned Cuba into a communist state 120 km away from the United States, has survived hundreds of attempts on his life by his enemies, from car ambushes to grenade attacks in baseball stadiums, Escalante said.

Some of the most imaginative cloak-and-dagger plots were the brainchild of the Central Intelligence Agency, he said.

They included poisoned cigars, an exploding shell meant to be planted in his favorite underwater fishing location and a scuba diving wet suit tainted with toxins.

Among early attempts devised by the CIA to discredit Castro was a plan to place chemical powders on his boots that would cause his beard to fall out when he was in New York to speak at the United Nations in 1960.

When that failed, the CIA planned to slip him a box of cigars tainted with LSD so that he would burst into fits of laughter during a television interview, said Escalante, author of a book that documents 167 plots against Castro.

But it was the CIA's plans to poison Castro with botulinum toxins in the early 1960s that came closest to succeeding.

The agency acknowledged last week for the first time that the plot to assassinate Castro was personally approved by the Kennedy administration's CIA director Allen Dulles.

The CIA declassified nearly 700 pages of secret records detailing some of its illegal acts during 25 years of overseas assassination attempts and domestic spying.

The agency's so-called "Family Jewels" describe the initial efforts to get rid of Castro by using a go-between to convince two top mobsters, Salvatore Giancana and Santos Trafficant, the head of the Mafia's Cuban casino operations, to assassinate Castro. Giancana suggested poisoning him.

Six potent pills were provided in 1961 to Juan Orta, identified as a Cuban official who had been receiving kickback payments from gambling interests, who still had access to Castro and was in a financial bind. But Orta got cold feet. *Reuters*

MEXICAN ICON FRIDA

Undated photo shows Frida Kahlo (right) hugging the former wife of Diego Rivera, Guadalupe Marin. Kahlo also was married to Rivera. Mexico's celebration of the centennial anniversary of the famed artist's birth this summer demonstrates there is still much to learn about one of its most revered 20th century icons, a woman whose life and self-portraits have inspired books, plays and even a 2002 Hollywood film. AP

The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

UK looks into Qaida link to bombing plot

LONDON—INVESTIGATORS ARE TRACING THEIR way through a maze of foreign links to a failed bomb plot in Britain to establish the possible role of al-Qaida's inner circle or its Iraqi arm, security sources said on Thursday.

Police and intelligence agencies were trying to determine how eight people arrested in a suspected militant Islamist plot to bomb London and Scotland came into contact with each other.

Two are from India, six from the Middle East and all had medical connections, including at least four doctors. None has so far been charged in connection with two unexploded London car bombs and a botched attack on Glasgow airport in Scotland using a fuel-laden jeep, which burst into flames.

"All the overseas angles are being followed up," a security source said. "The significance of overseas associations is very high up on our list of questions that we want answers to." Police would not confirm a CNN report that they had found a suicide note in the wreckage of the jeep. While Prime Minister Gordon Brown has spoken of al-Qaida links to the attempted bombings, the extent of these remains unclear.

Security analysts say it is rare for cells to arise spontaneously without a guiding hand from seasoned militants. On the other hand, they are puzzled by the slapdash nature of the latest plot, which triggered a top security alert but claimed no victims and left behind a series of clues.

"My impression is that they (the Glasgow attackers) only had a Plan A, and not a Plan B," said Sergeant Torquil Campbell, a policeman who tackled one of the airport attackers. "The plan was to explode their vehicle and that they would go up with it." The British tabloid newspaper the Mirror reported that four of the suspects met in the university town of Cambridge in 2005, suggesting the group might have been formed then.

A security source said investigators still had an open mind on the question of whether the suspects met, and become radicalized, before or after they arrived in Britain. The families of two of them—an Indian and a Jordanian—have denied they were militants and voiced disbelief at the arrests.

Britain has seen a marked increase in al-Qaida-type plots since it joined the United States in invading Iraq in 2003.

An intelligence paper leaked to the Sunday Times in April said the country faced threats not only from "core" al-Qaida, based in Pakistan and Afghanistan, but also increasingly from al-Qaida in Iraq (AQ-I).

It said AQ-I networks were "active in the UK" and there was intelligence that AQ-I's Kurdish network in Iran might be planning a large-scale attack on a Western target.

Anxious over a possible anti-Muslim backlash, British Muslims will on Friday take out newspaper advertisements condemning the recent attempted bomb attacks.

Several plots in Britain have been directed or inspired by al-Qaida figures abroad. Two of the four British suicide bombers who killed 52 people in London in 2005 were believed to have associated with members of the network in Pakistan.

Dhiren Barot, convicted last November of planning several attacks including one to blow up cars packed with gas canisters, had traveled to Pakistan to present the scheme to his "al-Qaida overlords," his trial judge said. Gas cylinders were found in all three vehicles involved in the London and Glasgow incidents.

In another British bomb trial, evidence emerged of contacts in Pakistan in 2003 between one of the plotters and a senior Iraqi al-Qaida leader, Abd al-Hadi, now held at the US military prison in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

The memo leaked to the Sunday Times said Hadi had urged a "large-scale" attack on Britain, ideally before Prime Minister Tony Blair stepped down. The London car bombs were found two days after he handed the premiership to Brown. Reuters

WORLD WONDER CONTENDER
Members of World Wildlife Foundation place a giant faucet near the statue of Christ the Redeemer at Corcovado mountain, to commemorate World Environment Day in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil last June 5. Christ the Redeemer is among the leading contenders to be the new seven wonders of the world as a massive poll enters its final month with votes already cast by more than 50 million people, organizers say. AP

Pakistan cleric says he'd rather die than surrender

ISLAMABAD—A PAKISTANI cleric holed up in a besieged mosque in the capital declared Friday he would rather die than surrender, dramatically upping the stakes amid claims human shields are being held inside.

Abdul Rashid Ghazi, deputy leader of the pro-Taliban Lal Masjid, or Red Mosque, made the defiant statement on the fourth day of a bloody standoff that has already claimed 19 lives.

"We have decided that we can be martyred but we will not surrender. We are ready for our heads to be cut off but we will not bow to them," he told the private Geo television station.

The government rejected a conditional surrender offer last night by Ghazi, whose brother Abdul Aziz was captured on Wednesday while trying to flee the mosque dressed in a burqa.

Heavy gunfire and explosions rocked the mosque early on Friday and there was no call for predawn prayers from the mosque's loudspeakers, indicating the damage inflicted by security forces on the fortified complex.

Troops backed by armored personnel carriers and helicopter gunships have been moving closer to the mosque and have blown up much of its surrounding walls.

DEPUTY leader of the Red Mosque Abdul Rashid Ghazi. AFP

A mosque official, on condition of anonymity, said that there were casualties in the early Friday gunbattles and the building had been hit by further mortar fire from security forces.

Hundreds of Islamic students are still inside the mosque compound, along with up to 60 "hardcore" armed militants, officials have said.

President Pervez Musharraf had earlier ordered that no military action should be taken until women and children were out of the mosque, but repeated that only an unconditional surrender was acceptable, officials said. AFP

Cracking myth that women talk more than men

By Donald G. McNeil Jr.

BRIEFLY: WHO TALKS MORE? Man? Woman?

Conventional wisdom: Women use 20,000 words a day, men 7,000. Come cocktail hour, hubby played out. Wife frustrated: 13,000 words to go, no takers. Bad for sex.

But wisdom comes from populist 2006 book, "The Female Brain." Data shaky. Skeptics abound.

Friday, study published Science magazine: 396 subjects wear tiny microphones. Result: whoops. Women emit 16,125 words per day, men 15,669. Statistically, even-steven.

But authors admit flaw: All 396 were college students—congenitally loquacious, no jobs, no commutes, no need for aphonic mesmerization by Monday Night Football.

Despite flaw, says lead author, Matthias R. Mehl, University of Arizona psychologist, "Our paper puts to rest the idea that the female brain evolved to be talkative and the male brain evolved to be reticent."

But fact slyly not mentioned in Science study: After first printing of "Female Brain," author, Louann Brizendine, began worrying that 20,000 vs. 7,000 figure was just invented by marriage counselors and removed it.

Thirteen printings in 21 languages later, myth clings on anyway.

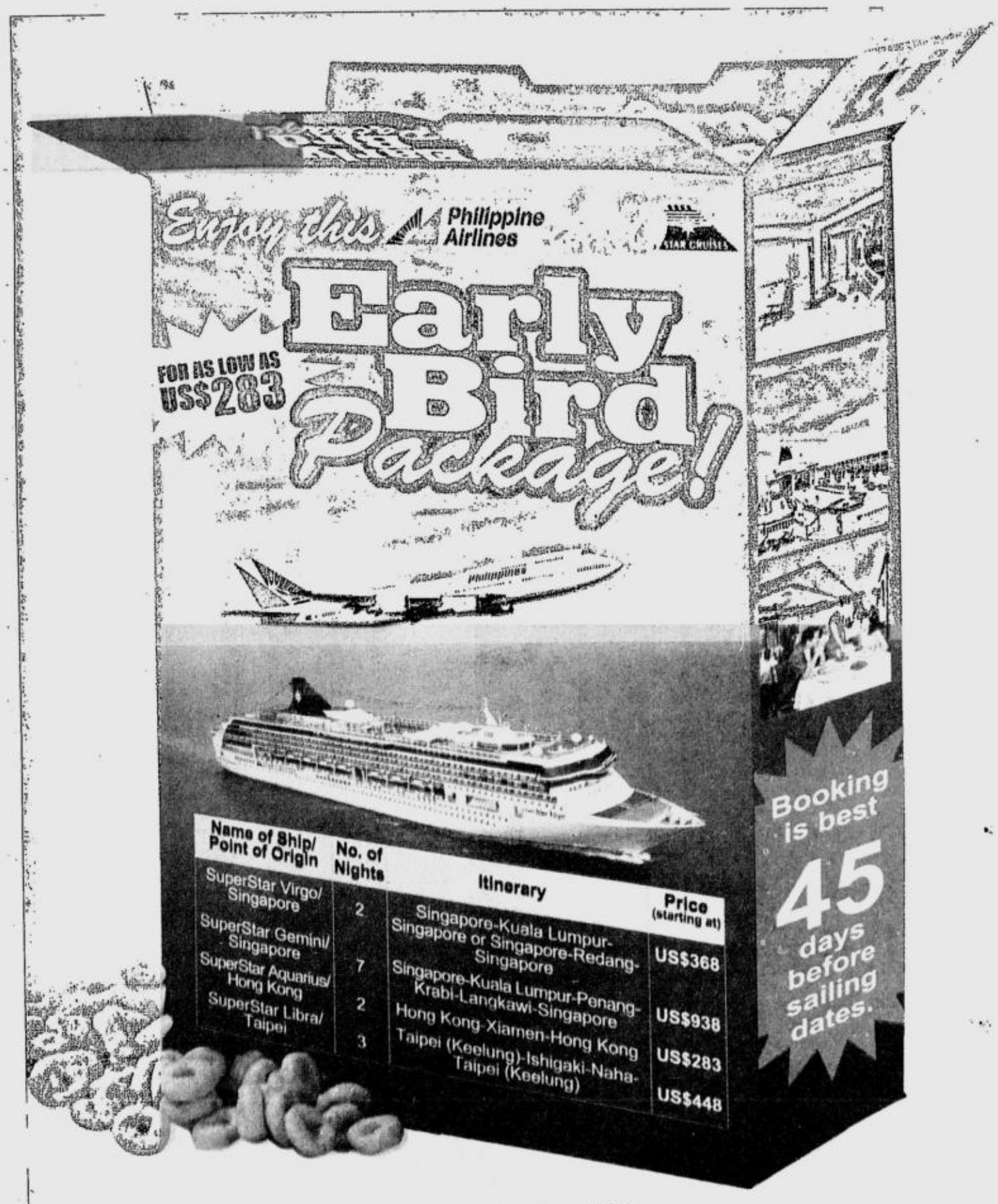
Real truth: Whole field maybe less hard science than squishy sexual politics; 1993 literature review included studies insisting men talked more, "further evidence of domination and exploitation of power over women."

Finally, joke (typical male conversation dodge) to prove myth remains persuasive.

Man: Study here says women talk twice as much as men.

Wife: Of course we do. We have to repeat everything we say.

Man: ... *NYT*



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WHAT'S INSIDE

Nadal fights way to quarter-finals /A30

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Editor Teddyvic S. Melendres
Assistant Editor Francis T. J. Ochoa

San Mig-RP cagers bow to Jordanians

By Ernesto A. Gonzales

TAIPEI—IT WAS SUPPOSED TO be a "study game" but Jordan ended up virtually taking the San Miguel-Pilipinas national quintet to school.

The Jordanians dominated the first half with superior shooting and aggressive rebounding, then repelled repeated rallies by the Filipinos to score a 74-70 victory Friday and grab the lead in the 29th William Jones Cup International basketball tournament here.

With the Filipinos coming up with their worst first-quarter output of nine points, the bigger Jordanians went on to take the game's biggest lead of 38-26 at halftime, then stayed there for good.

The win over the Filipinos, whom they will next meet in the preliminary round of the Fiba Asia Championship in Japan starting late this month, lifted the Jordanians on top with a 4-1 record in this straight single-round tournament.

Defending champion United States pinned a second straight loss on Lebanon, 81-70, as both teams tied for second at 3-2, along with Qatar, which blasted Japan, 86-68.

Although Mark Caguioa and Gabe Norwood brought the Filipinos within three points three times, the Jordanians kept their poise with clutch three-point shooting.

"It was a good loss for us, if there's such a thing," said RP coach Chot Reyes, adding that they did not play at full strength.

Danny Seigle was still resting and Renren Ritualo temporarily yielded his slot to James Yap.

Turning to the game with Iran at 3:30 p.m. tomorrow, Reyes said it will all boil down to "how fresh we are going into it."

Iran is also in the same bracket with the Filipinos and Jordan in the preliminary round of the Fiba Asia along with defending champion China.

'They just won't give up'

"They just won't give up," said Jordan coach Mario Palma of the Filipinos, whom he said on Thursday he would merely be studying to get a feel of how to play them.

"We proved that we can play them, but we also know that they can beat us. So it's going to be a great match when we meet again."

The loss, which spoiled the joy of the Filipinos on the arrival of team manager Robert Non, booted them out of title contention with a 2-3 slate.

Caguioa, who led the Filipinos with 23 points, towed the Filipinos within two at 60-62 midway in the last quarter. Norwood then boosted RP within 65-67 and 68-70.

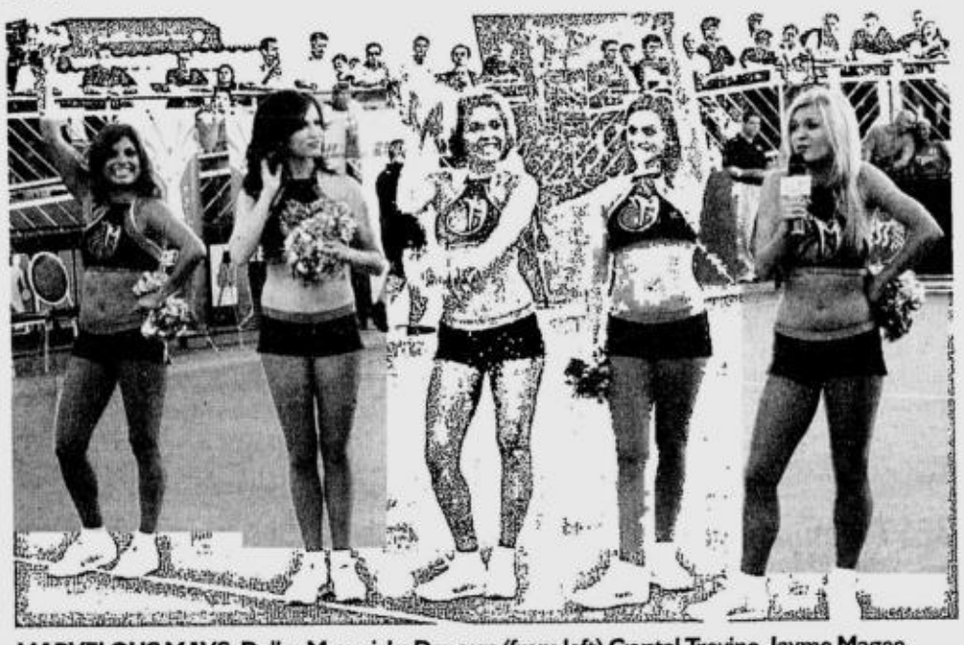
Kerby Raymundo actually had a chance to tie it but he blew two free throws with 1:03 left. Lebanon then responded with a four-point cluster to clinch it, 74-68, with 30 ticks remaining.

The scores:

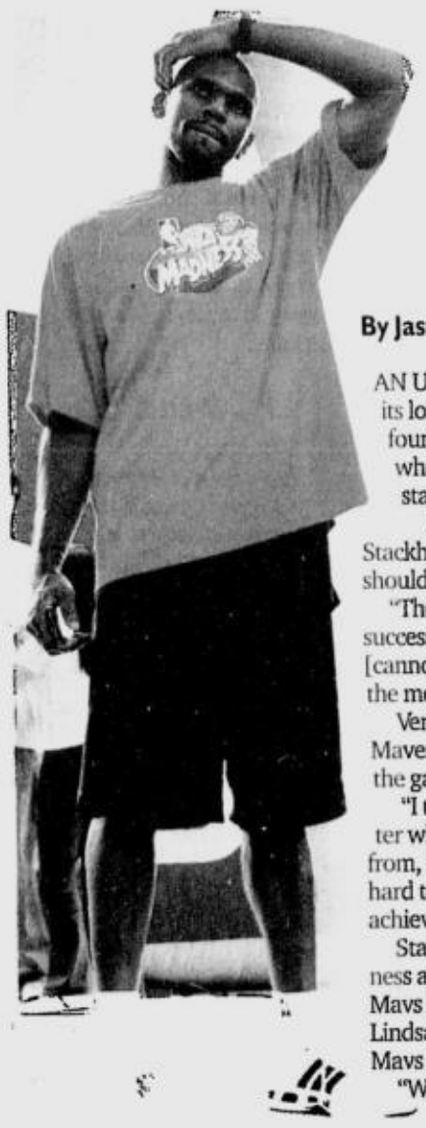
JORDAN 74—Almaayta 18, Idais 15, Dagles 9, Wright 8, Alkhas 8, Abaas 6, Soobzoko 5, Al-sous 3, Abbaas 2, Anajjar 0.

PHILIPPINES 70—Caguioa 25, Alapag 17, Raymundo 8, Norwood 5, Williams 5, Hontiveros 4, Helterbrand 4, Taulava 2, Pennisi 0, Yap 0, Menk 0.

Quarters: 14-9, 38-26, 53-48, 74-70



MARVELOUS MAVS: Dallas Mavericks Dancers (from left) Crystal Trevino, Jayme Magee, Mallory Mills, Lexy Hulme and Lindsay Shoulders make heads turn in yesterday's NBA Madness blast-off at the Mall of Asia. Mavs shooting guard Jerry Stackhouse (left), 16th best among NBA scorers, is special guest and part-host of the three-day affair. RUDY ESPERAS



'Stack' comes to the rescue of Pinoy quint

By Jasmine W. Payo

AN UNDER-FIRE BID BY THE COUNTRY TO REGAIN its lofty standing in the Asian basketball scene may have found an ally in NBA All-Star guard Jerry Stackhouse, who minced no words in describing critics and their constant put-downs.

"In the United States, we call them haters," said Stackhouse of local skeptics who insist that the Philippines should give up hope of excelling in international caging.

"They don't want you to see, they don't want you to have success. Nobody should tell anybody what they [can] or [cannot] do. If you have the desire and the work ethic, that's the most important thing."

Vertically challenged Filipinos, according to the Dallas Mavericks cager, have as much of a shot to claim mastery of the game as bigger and taller athletes.

"I think with young kids and people in general, no matter what culture, ethnic group or background you come from, if you set your mind, set your goals and really work hard to achieve those goals—I'm a firm believer that you can achieve those things," he said.

Stackhouse came to the Philippines to host the NBA Madness at the SM Mall of Asia until tomorrow together with Mavs Dancers Mallory Mills, Crystal Trevino, Lexy Hulme, Lindsay Shoulders and Jaymee Magee, and dunking mascot Mavs Man.

"We're trying to bring the games abroad," the 6-foot-6

'STACK'/ A28

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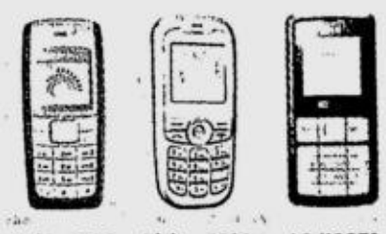

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UAAP wars begin; Archers test 'mystery' Maroons

By Jasmine W. Payo

WITH AN AIR OF CONFIDENCE ABOUT THEM AND a determination to bury the ghosts of a harrowing eligibility scandal, the La Salle Green Archers take the first step toward rebuilding a shattered reputation when they take on the University of the Philippines Maroons today at the start of the 70th UAAP men's basketball tournament at the Araneta Coliseum.

"Our main concern is to be competitive with other teams," said Archers coach Franz Pumaren. "We're almost in top shape, we have the rhythm."

After serving a one-year suspension for fielding ineligible players, La Salle brings back veterans TY Tang, Rico Maierhofer, JV Casio and Cholo Villanueva in an effort to reclaim its lofty standing in the collegiate scene.

GAMES TODAY
(*Araneta Coliseum*)
1 p.m.—Opening ceremonies
2 p.m.—La Salle vs UP (Srs)
4 p.m.—National U vs FEU (Srs)

The Archers and the Maroons collide at 2 p.m., right after the 1 p.m. opening rites.

Traditional powers Far Eastern University Tamaraws, headed by new coach Glenn Capacio, will test its new roster against the National University Bulldogs at 4 p.m.

Ranked as this season's top team, the Archers spice up their return by recruiting 6-foot-6 Serbian Marko Batricevic and Indonesian Ferdinand as imports.

Pumaren said, however, that the Archers, who ruled two preseason tournaments, will be up against an unfamiliar opponent.

"We didn't get to see UP [in the preseason tournaments]," said Pumaren. "We don't know what to expect against them, we're just preparing for possible scenarios."

The Maroons are expected to rely on veteran Vicmel Epres and the sophomore quartet of Rookie of the Year Woody Co, Migs de Asis, Veejay Serios and Martin Reyes.

Coach Joe Lipa will call the shots again for the Maroons, who absorbed a big blow when versatile point guard Marvin Cruz decided to forego his final year of eligibility to turn pro.

But among the key additions in the Maroons' lineup are former Ateneo high school point guard Mike Gamboa and FEU junior standouts Soc Rivera, Mark Lopez and Dexter Rosales.

The NU Bulldogs, tabbed as this year's darkhorse, boast a seasoned roster led by Edwin Asoro, Jonathan Fernanandez and Joseph Lingao-Lingao.

"The off season turned out very well for us, especially for our bench players who needed exposure," said coach Manny Dandan.

Knights, Cards drop big bombs

By Marc Anthony Reyes

TWO WINS INTO WHAT IS STARTING TO look like a promising campaign, the Letran Knights hardly looked satisfied. Until yesterday, that is.

The Knights finally brandished the defensive sting it loaded up on in the offseason, bleeding the San Sebastian Stags dry in the second quarter en route to a 71-61 blowout and a share of the lead yesterday in the NCAA men's basketball at The Arena in San Juan.

"This is the kind of game I want, defensively," said Letran coach Louie Alas, who authored the team dictum of holding down opponents to 60 points or less each game. "I'm very impressed at the way my rookies played defense. This is what we have been preparing for all summer."

The Knights, who gave up at least 80 points in their first two wins, tied idle San Beda at 3-0.

That triumph served as a prelude to another breakthrough win—Mapua's 86-80 decision over Jose Rizal that gave the Cardinals their first victory in the tournament after three losses.

Sean Co and Neil Pascual hit six straight free throws in the last 30 seconds to seal the outcome.

Jose Rizal led most of the way but surrendered too many fouls, sending Mapua to the line 53 times off 38 fouls. The Cardinals took advantage and knocked in 38 free throws. JRU fell to 1-2.

The Stags, on the other hand, suffered their second straight loss against a lone victory but coach Jorge Gallent didn't wait for the final buzzer to show his displeasure of the game.

Gallent, a multititled coach in the Philippine Basketball League, was tossed off the game after getting slapped with two technical fouls in the last four minutes with Letran leading, 52-44.

The scores

First Game

LETRAN 71—Jazul 20, Melegrito 16, faundo 10, Daa 8, Guevarra 4, Reposar 3, Latonio 3, J. Foronda 2, Cabonce 2, Gutilban 2, Del Rosario 1, Ranises 0, C. Foronda 0, Dangcal 0.

SAN SEBASTIAN 61—Najorda 11, Zulueta 11, Viray 8, Bulawan 7, Aquino 6, Saquillo 5, Ballesteros 4, Delgado 4, Quiamco 4, Raymundo 1, Del Rio 0, De Leon 0, Dela Cruz 0.

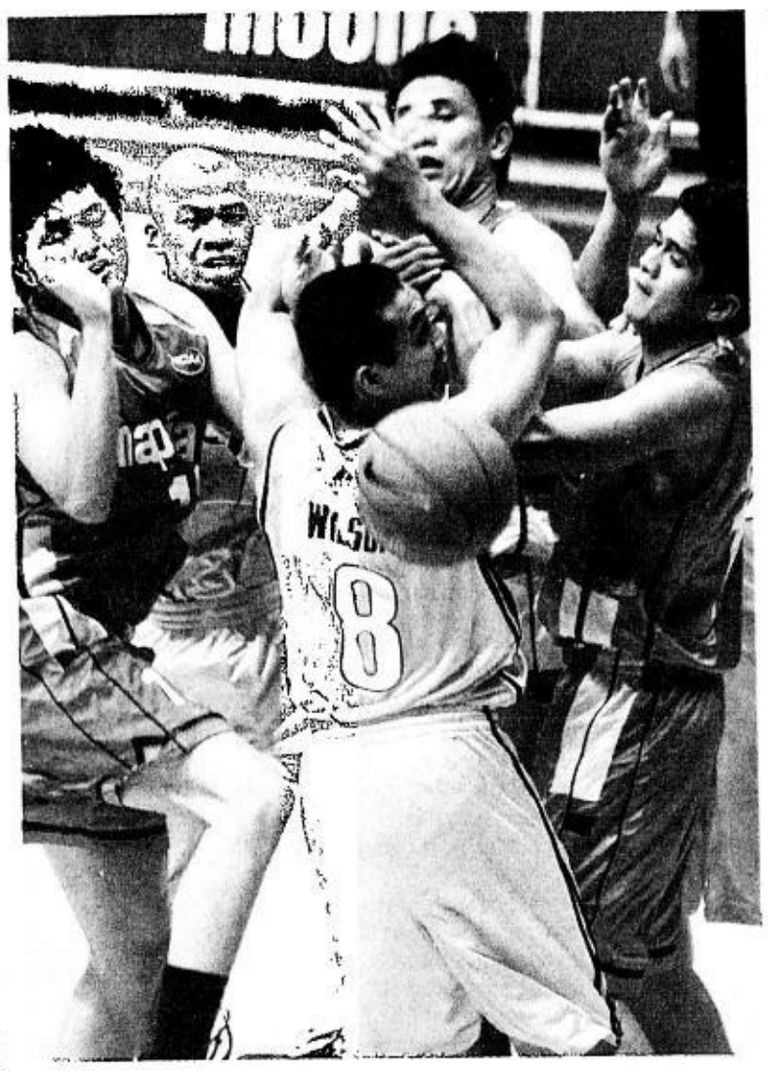
Quarters: 14-15, 32-21, 46-35, 71-61

Second Game

MAPUA 86—Dela Peña 19, Pascual 18, Co 14, Del Rosario 13, Banal 8, Sumalinog 7, Acosta 5, Guillermo 2, Palomique 0.

JOSE RIZAL 80—Wilson 20, Hayes 14, Agas 11, Pradas 8, Nocom 7, Sena 6, Cunanan 4, Cagoco 3, Kabigting 3, Se 2, Bulangis 2, Montemayor 0, Ramos 0, Lituania 0.

Quarters: 19-16, 40-39, 57-65, 86-80



JOSE Rizal's John Wilson is dispossessed by Mapua defenders in yesterday's game. The Cardinals prevailed. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Duncil, two ex-pros join tryouts for SEAG team

By Jasmine W. Payo

FORMER UAAP STANDOUT JOJO DUNCIL OF the University of Santo Tomas and two ex-pros showed up in yesterday's tryout for the national team at the Reyes Gym in Mandaluyong.

Duncil, who recently opted to forego his final year of collegiate eligibility to turn pro, and former PBA players Ato Morano and Estong Ballesteros joined the scrimmages of the squad set to compete in the Southeast Asian Games this December in Thailand.

But Duncil, the Finals Most Valuable Player in the UST Tigers' title-run last year, said he's still weighing his options.

"I'm not yet sure (if I'll join the PBA draft this August), I just want to be fit for now," he said.

Despite missing the first day of tryouts last Wednesday, Duncil was welcomed by national team coach Junel Baculi and Harbour Centre team manager Erick Arejola, who's tasked to oversee the SEAG team selection.

"We're glad (Duncil) joined our scrimmages today, at least we have more star players," said Arejola. "We need more players who have patience, determination and strong commitment."

Morano, who donned the national colors in the 1990s, was among the respondents in Baculi's earlier invitation to retired PBA players who can provide experience to the young squad.

Other new faces in the tryouts were Burger King's Ronjay Buenafe, Toyota's JP Alcaraz and Christian Coronel and Henkel-Sista's Khiel Misa.

Harbour Centre, which recently captured its third straight PBL title, also sent its core players including back-to-back PBL MVP Jason Castro, two-time Finals MVP Chico Lanete, Beau Belga, Jerwin Gaco, Chad Alonzo and Ryan Araña.

Wide-open battle seen as NCAA volley gets going

GAMES TODAY
(*San Beda Gym*)
9 a.m.—St. Benilde vs Perpetual Help (Jrs/Women's/Srs)
12 noon—Letran vs JRU (Srs)

WITH LAST YEAR'S CHAMPION PHILIPPINE Christian University serving a one-year suspension, expect a wide-open race in the 83rd NCAA volleyball tournament which fires off today at the San Beda College gym.

The Letran Knights, runner-up to PCU and the favorite to succeed the Dolphins as champion, tackles host Jose Rizal University at 12 noon.

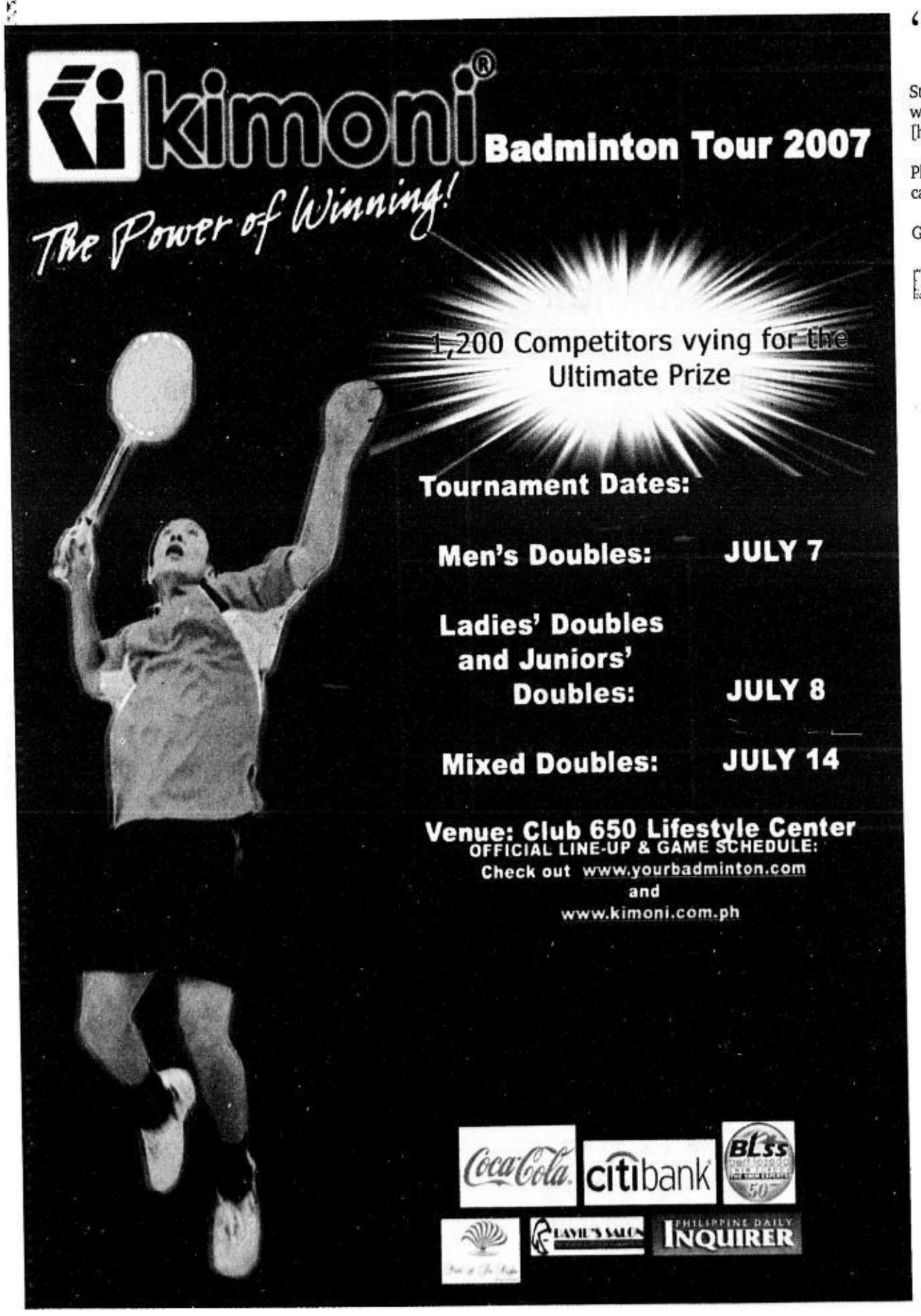
PCU was barred from playing this season after one of its players in the high school basketball squad was found guilty of identity switching.

The junior, women and senior teams of St. Benilde and Perpetual Help open hostilities at 9 a.m. after brief opening rites.

San Sebastian, the back-to-back junior and women's defending champion, opens its title-retention bid on Thursday against San Beda.

The Lady Stags, the winningest NCAA women's team with 19 crowns, is coming off a runner-up finish in the Shakey's V-League tournament.

However, they would play without Jinni Mondejar for at least one month. The 2006 MVP underwent an appendectomy operation, forcing her to miss the V-League finals. *Romina S. Austria*



'Stack' comes to . . .

From page A27

Stackhouse said. "And obviously it has been working with the way the European players [have] caught up with the NBA players."

Stackhouse cited his teammate, Most Valuable Player Dirk Nowitzki, as the face of international caging success.

"Dirk has become an inspiration to all kids in Germany," the 12-year NBA veteran said.

In his three-day visit, Stackhouse will conduct skills training demonstration, share tips on the game and interact with local fans.

Showcasing the Larry O' Brien NBA championship trophy has also been the highlight of the event, which features numerous hoop activities such as a three-on-three challenge, a slam dunk contest and a three-point shootout.

SPORTSWATCH

BEST clinics begin

TRIPLE 7 (07-07-07) IS EXpected to bring luck to all BEST Center basketball hopefuls who start today their Saturday-only sessions in three sites—Ateneo College covered courts, Xavier Scool and San Beda College-Manila. Level 1 to 5 classes on Introduction to Basketball will be held from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. at Ateneo while level 1 to 3 clinics will be staged at Xavier School and SBC Manila from 1 to 4 p.m.

40 bidders unbeaten

THE 305-ENTRY "HATAWAN SA Tag-ulan" 6-cock derby resumes today with its third round of eliminations featuring 100 or so fights at the Roligon Mega Cockpit. Forty participants have remained unbeaten with two wins each after two days of battle. Host Rolly Ligon said that a day-champion's prize of P600,000 will be divided among participants who can score four straight wins in Monday's semifinal round. All qualifiers will compete for the championship on Wednesday.

Key PCAP tilt today

WHO WILL BE CROWNED THE Pinoy Cockers Association of the Philippines (PCAP) Cocker of the Year? The grand winner will be known today as the 60-fight PCAP 5-cock derby gets under way at 5 p.m. at the Makati Coliseum with B-Meg Derby Ace and Gran Matador as sponsors. Frontrunners Biboy Enriquez, Joel Fernando and Paul Dominguez (Firebird Jimafer BJ, 37.5 points) need to score four more wins to be assured of the title. Sandy Sur (Michael One, 36.5) and Jun Pascual (Sierra Madre Ridge, 34.5) occupy second and third spots, respectively. Other top contenders are Rainier Kau (Sitio Maumel, 33.5) and Efren Canlas (Bacolor Gold, 33.5).

DAVAO RUN: Milo AVP for Sports Pat Goc-ong (second from right) fields questions on the 31st Milo Marathon's Davao City leg during yesterday's press conference at the Dencia's Restaurant in the city. With him are (from left) Nestle Phils. Inc. marketing promotions specialist Anne Marichelle Tupag, national race director Rudy Biscocho and local organizer Vic Sai. About 10,000 runners are vying in tomorrow's race which will be fired off in the city's Rizal Park.

LPC 3-cocker is on

THE "HATAW PINOY" 3-COCK derby takes center stage at the Las Piñas Coliseum tonight with prominent cockers seeing action. Hosted by Lando Luzong and Mayor Nene Aguilar, the event stakes a cash prize of P350,000 for an entry fee of P5,500. The fastest win champion will get P20,000 worth of products from Univet Agricultural Products Inc. Meanwhile, screening of stags for the LPC 7-Stag Derby starts in the first week of August.

DLSU nips Ateneo eleven in Razon Cup

AN EARLY SECOND-HALF GOAL GAVE LA SALLE a 1-0 win over arch rival Ateneo at the start of the 2nd Terry Razon Copa Filipina Football League over the weekend at the Ateneo soccer grounds.

Kim Smit, the younger of La Salle coach Hans Smit's two sons, netted the winning goal early in the second half.

A few minutes into the game, the Eagles lost goalie Tyrone Caballes who was issued a red card for straying far out of the penalty box and obstructing what looked like a sure La Salle goal.

Kaya, last year's runner-up, whipped Ateneo FC, 4-0, in the other match.

Pacquiao-Barrera on Solar

SOLAR SPORTS WON THE RIGHT TO air the expected blockbuster fight between super featherweight greats Manny Pacquiao and Marco Antonio Barrera, which takes place in October at the Mandalay Bay in Las Vegas.

The deal, announced yesterday, was part of a multi-fight package agreed upon by Solar Sports and Pacquiao's MP Productions, which holds all Philippine television rights of the reigning American Boxing Writers' Association Fighter of the Year.

Solar Sports, which airs on cable, tied up with giant network GMA-7 and RPN-9 to broadcast the fight on free TV.

The second fight between two of the most charismatic names in the lower weight divisions has a Las Vegas schedule of Oct. 6 (Oct. 7 in Manila). The first fight in 2003, which ended with Pacquiao's stirring 11th-round knockout of Barrera that catapulted the Filipino to worldwide fame, was held in San Antonio.

"We are very pleased that we managed to get all the rights on Manny's future bouts," said Solar Entertainment COO Peter Chanliong.

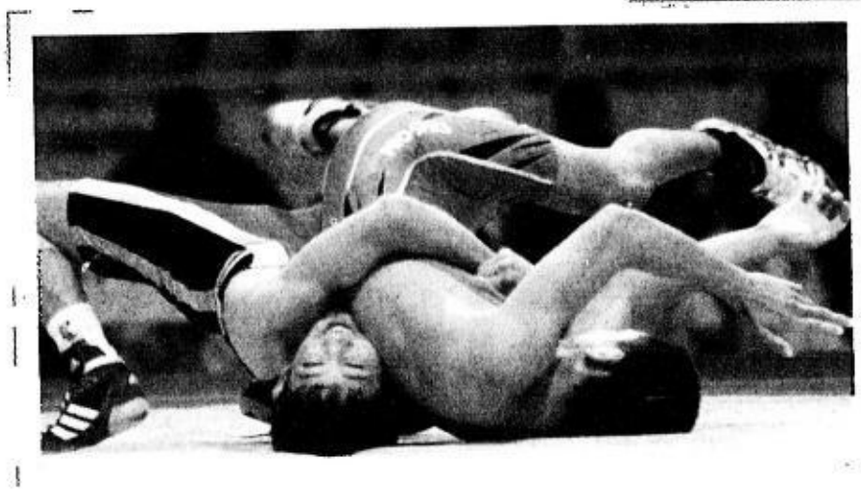
Solar Entertainment president Wilson Tieng added: "It's not only about the right to be called the home champions. It's also about continuing our commitment to bring the best sports shows to Filipinos."

"We all know *naman na kahit ano'ng mangyari papanoorin ng mga kababayan natin ang laban ni Manny*," said Solar Entertainment VP for broadcast Ralph Roy.

Pacquiao may have won the first fight between two future Hall-of-Famers but Barrera is far from the fighter who was pummeled into submission in the first fight.

After losing to Pacquiao, Barrera clustered six straight wins, including one via a majority decision against bitter rival and fellow Mexican Erik Morales.

Marlon Bernardino, Contributor



IN TROUBLE: The Philipppines' Romeo Calderon (in red) gets pinned by Zhangeldy Azkenov of Kazakhstan during their match in yesterday's Asian Junior Wrestling Championships. *Story on Late Sports on A18.* ROMY HOMILLADA

Del Mundo tops US chess event, earns FM title

US MASTER ANTON PAOLO DEL MUNDO scored seven points in nine rounds to cop first place in Section 1 (Under 2400) of the World Open chess tournament last Thursday at the Valley Forge Radisson and Convention Plaza, King of Prussia in Pennsylvania.

Del Mundo, a former Ateneo stalwart and now a software engineer in the US, registered a performance rating of 2503 to lead four others tied with him for first place.

He also has a Fide rating increase of 29.1 points, thus pushing his Elo rating from 2296 to 2325 and making him a Fide Master.

Sharing first place with Del Mundo were Russian International Master Mikhail Zlotnikov, Mongolian FM Tegshsuren Enkbat and American FMs William Morrison and Ilye Figler. They earned about $6,000 each.

Paolo's dad Herky tied for fourth place in Section 5. *Marlon Bernardino, Contributor*

Ozamiz nips Spring Oil 5

OZAMIZ CITY—MELFRED SAMPILO drained a 3-pointer with 1.2 seconds left to lift defending champion Ozamiz past Tagaytay Spring, 78-77, Thursday night in the 2007 Spring Cooking Oil-NBC National Cup basketball tournament at the Gov. Angel Medina gym here.

Ozamiz's victory avenged an 84-83 loss to Tagaytay on June 11 in Malabon City and enabled Mayor Reynaldo Parojinog's Cotta Shrine cagers to top the elimination round at 12-4.

Tagaytay dropped to 10-4 and a second place tie with idle Firefly Iligan in the tourney supported by Sulpicio Lines, Spring Cooking Oil, Yahoo Phils., San Miguel Beer, Caltex, Basketball TV and Viva Prime Channel.

Trailing 75-77, Ozamiz went to Sampilo, who scored his fourth trey in as many attempts, to foil the bid of NBC president Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla's and league EVP Mayor Bambol Tolentino's Cooking Oil Masters from repeating over the champs.

Tagaytay-Spring was locked in another crucial match with Mayor Sammy Co's Pagadian Explorers at presstime yesterday.

Sampilo finished with 13 points to steal the show from Marlon Basco and Bruce Dacia, who had 19 and 17, respectively.

The scores:

OZAMIZ 78—Basco 19, Dacia 17, Sampilo 13, Nicdao 6, Alvarado 4, Gaturnbalo 2, Bansil 2, Alberto 2, Liangco 2, Cavan 1, Tiongson 0, Balares 0.

TAGAYTAY 77—Rodriguez 15, De Castro 11, Marquez 10, Bolocon 8, Tajonera 8, Reyes 7, Mallari 6, Epondulan 6, Yambao 3, Legaspi 3, Victolero 0.

Quarters: 19-14, 33-41, 61-64, 78-77

Tough track for Asian Supercross

MOTOCROSS ENTHUSIASTS ARE IN for a treat when the second round of the 2007 FIM-UAM Asian Supercross Championships unreel at the Fast Track Circuit in Upper Bicutan, Taguig City, on July 22.

The Supercross took off with a big bang in Puerto Princesa City in March with defending champion Arnon Theplib of Thailand pulling off convincing victories in the two motos of the Asian 125 event.

Glenn Aguilar, the country's top rider, recovered from a sluggish start to salvage third place behind Australian Kane Scanlan.

Arungkrung Pinpon, a 12-year-old sensation, made it a double victory for the Thais by prevailing in the Asian 85cc event. Indonesian Fahran Hendra wound up second while Filipino Jenzen Manuel landed third.

The Fast Track event has drawn crack 125cc and 85cc riders from Japan, Thailand, New Zealand, Indonesia, China, Hong Kong, UAE, Guam and India.

The event is sanctioned by the National Motorcycle Sports and Safety Association and promoted by Xtreme Worx. It is being supported by Taguig City Mayor Freddie Tinga. For details, e-mail namssa01@hotmail.com or call 0917-8992363.

P1-M poker finals at Airport CF today

THE GRAND FINALS OF THE PHILIPPINE POKER Tour (PPT) Million-Peso Hold'em Championship will be held today at Airport Casino-Filipino Parañaque.

Registration starts at 1 p.m. and play begins at 2:30.

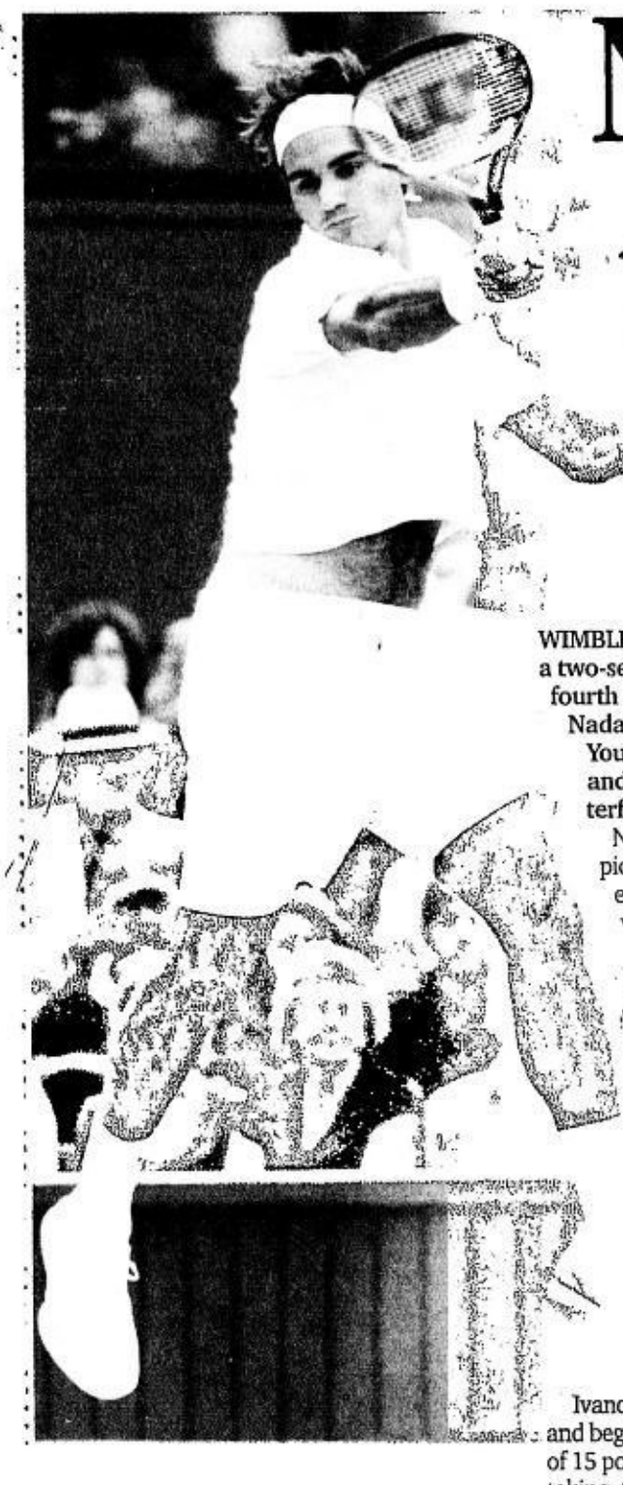
The winner of the event will join the elite group of poker millionaires that includes inaugural champion Derek Bautista and Chris Parker, last year's winner.

PPT chair and CEO Rey Gamboa said the champion will have an option to choose as prize an all-expense paid vacation in Los Angeles and a stint in the prestigious "Legends of Poker" tourney in August.

Otherwise, the champion gets P1 million in cash prize and the coveted champion's bracelet.

Winners of the satellite tournaments are expected to see action. Those who failed to qualify can still join the finals by paying the tournament fees of P33,000.

SPORTS



ROGER Federer returns to Juan Carlos Ferrer in one of the few points the two played in a rain-stopped match. AP

Nadal fights way to quarterfinals

Venus still in orbit; Federer match postponed by rain

WIMBLEDON, ENGLAND—ERASING a two-set deficit despite playing on a fourth consecutive day, Rafael Nadal came back to beat Mikhail Youzhny in five sets Thursday and reach the Wimbledon quarterfinals.

Nadal, the 2006 runner-up, picked up early service breaks in each of the final three sets to win, 4-6, 3-6, 6-1, 6-2, 6-2.

"After the first two sets, the next three sets maybe I play my best game on grass in my life," Nadal said.

Venus Williams had a much easier time Thursday, playing outstanding tennis to reach the semifinals by beating No. 5 Svetlana Kuznetsova, 6-3, 6-4. Williams will next face French Open finalist Ana Ivanovic, who defeated No. 14 Nicole Vaidisova, 4-6, 6-2, 7-5.

Ivanovic saved three match points and beginning with the last one, won 13 of 15 points. That sent her on her way to taking the match's last four games. It ended when Vaidisova double-faulted for the sixth time.

"I knew I could do it," Ivanovic said. "I knew I could make some good shots and be aggressive and move forward and put pressure."

Play was suspended for the day with four-time defending champion Roger Federer and No. 20 Juan Carlos Ferrero still in the first set of their quarterfinal. Federer was serving at deuce at 5-5.

DJOKOVIC AP

IVANOVIC REUTERS

No. 3 Andy Roddick and No. 12 Richard Gasquet took the court to warm up but never started.

Youzhny, one of only three players to have beaten Nadal twice in the last year, struggled midway through his match with pain in his lower back.

He called for a trainer after losing the third set. Lying on his stomach, the Russian got his lower back massaged. After the fifth game of the fourth set, he was again on the ground with the trainer stretching his back.

"Big disbalance between left side and right side in my back," Youzhny said. "When I play a lot, more and more and I start to feel pain."

Nadal's third-round match, which was supposed to begin Saturday, didn't finish until Wednesday. The three-time French Open champion failed to convert his first match point Monday, and had to wait until Wednesday to get another because of rain delays.

Nadal is trying to become the first man to win the French Open and Wimbledon in the same year since Bjorn Borg in 1980.

In the quarterfinals, the second-seeded Spaniard will face No. 7 Tomas Berdych, who beat Jonas Bjorkman, 6-4, 6-0, 6-7 (6), 6-0.

No. 10 Marcos Baghdatis, who lost to Nadal in last year's semifinals, advanced by beating No. 6 Nikolay Davydenko, 7-6 (5), 7-6 (5), 6-3 in the fourth round. He will next play No. 4 Novak Djokovic, who beat 2002 champion Lleyton Hewitt, 7-6 (8), 7-6 (2), 4-6, 7-6 (5). *AP*

AT&T NATIONAL

Struggling Tiger seven shots down

BETHESDA, MARYLAND—HOSTING HIS own tournament for the first time, Tiger Woods bogeyed his first two holes.

Then came the rain.

It didn't get much better after that. After a brief delay, Woods continued to be a much more gracious host than he planned. By the time his round was over, he had missed a 2-foot tap-in, hit a man in the face with a drive and tossed his putter in frustration at his bag several times.

His Thursday scorecard at the inaugural AT&T National included seven bogeys in a 3-over round of 73, tied for 77th place and seven shots behind five co-leaders: Vijay Singh, Jim Furyk, KJ Choi, Joe Ogilvie and Stuart Appleby.

Woods putted 34 times, including three three-putts, and he missed every attempt longer than 8 feet.

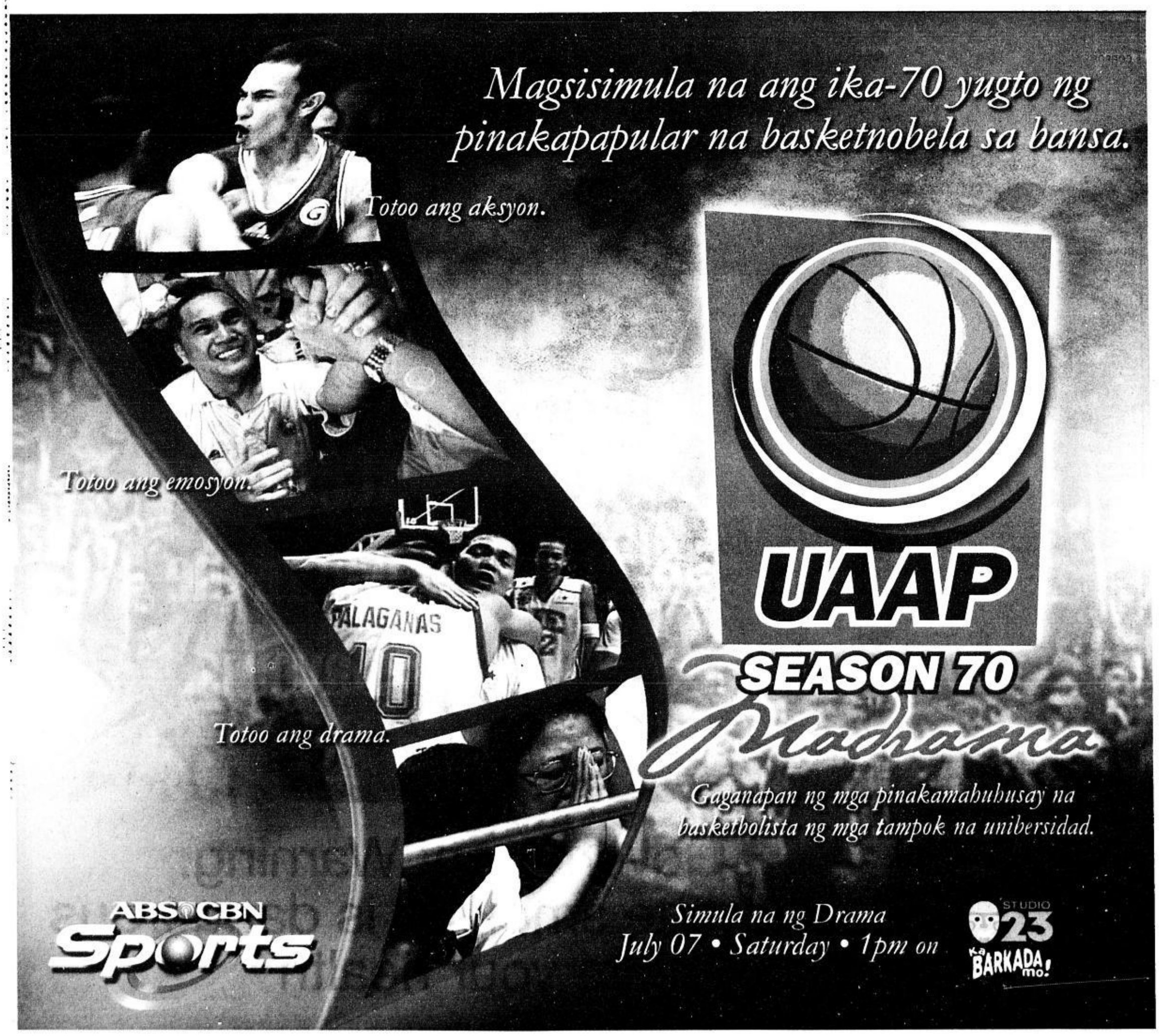
"It's one of the worst putting rounds I have had in years," Woods said. "I'm going to have to figure out something for (Friday) because evidently what I'm doing is not even close to being right. I've got to fix it. I've got to get back in this tournament."

Woods hadn't played since finishing second at the US Open three weeks ago, and he said he still had the fast greens of Oakmont in his mind on a damp, humid day at Congressional Country Club.

The leaderboard is an eclectic mix of styles, ranging from the long-hitting Singh to older, lay-up players such as 51-year-old Fred Funk and 47-year-old Corey Pavin, who are both one stroke off the lead.

Choi, who started on the back nine, had to overcome bogeys at Nos. 3 and 5, his 12th and 14th holes to get his 66. Singh, who also started at No. 10, had his lone bogey early—at the par-4 14th, but birided No. 9 get to 4 under.

Appleby closed with three straight birdies. *AP*



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BUSINESS

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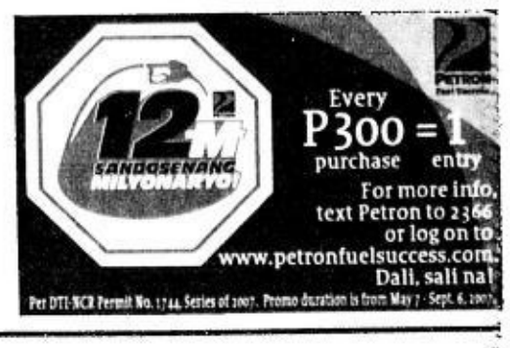
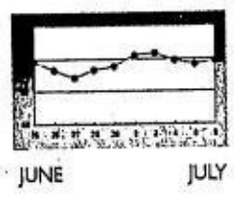


Forex reserves hit $26.4B in end-June

BSP says level is near high-end of gov't target for '07

INDICATORS
CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE
₱46.08 = $1
As of 5 p.m., July 6, 2007

By Michelle V. Remo

THE COUNTRY'S GROSS international reserves rose further in June to an historic high of $26.4 billion as foreign capital continued to flow into the economy, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas reported yesterday.

The GIR, or the amount of foreign currencies and foreign-currency denominated assets kept at the central bank, was at a previous all-time high of $25.6 billion in May.

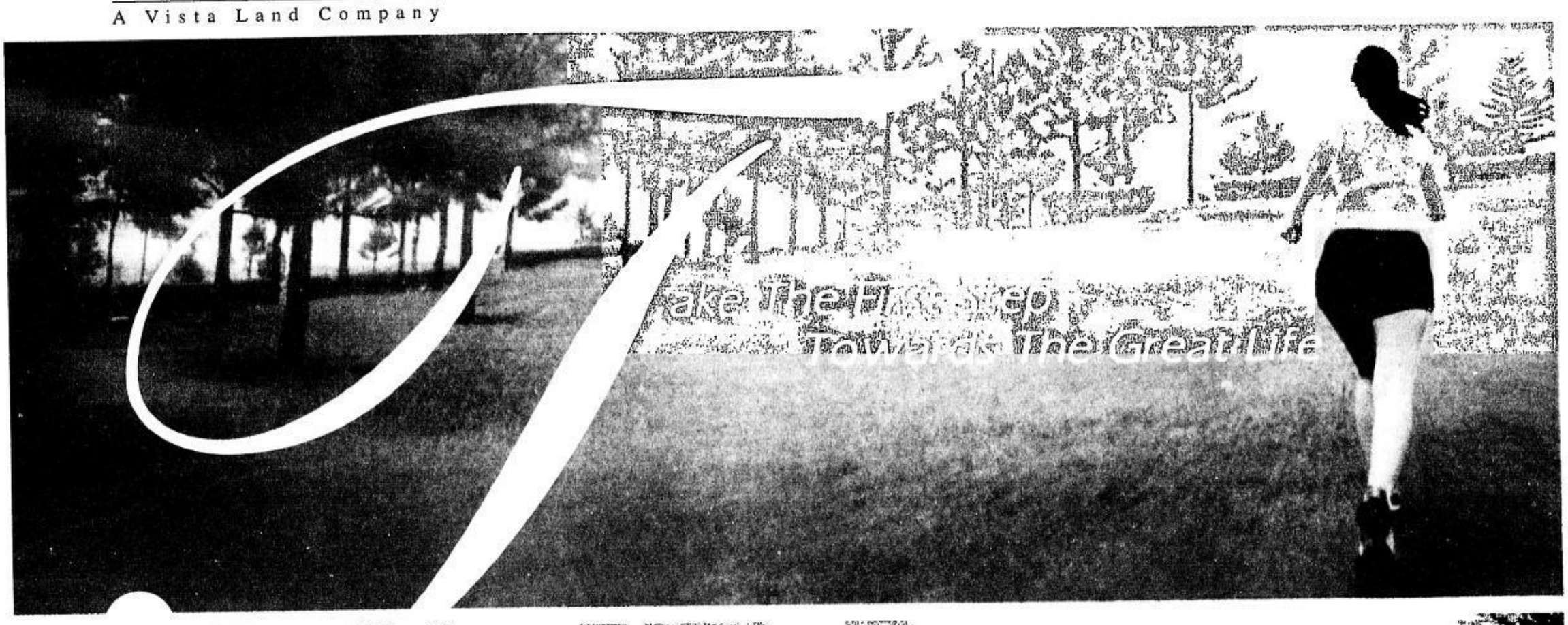
The BSP said the latest GIR figure already kept the country close to hitting the high-end of the full-year target of between $26 billion and $26.6 billion.

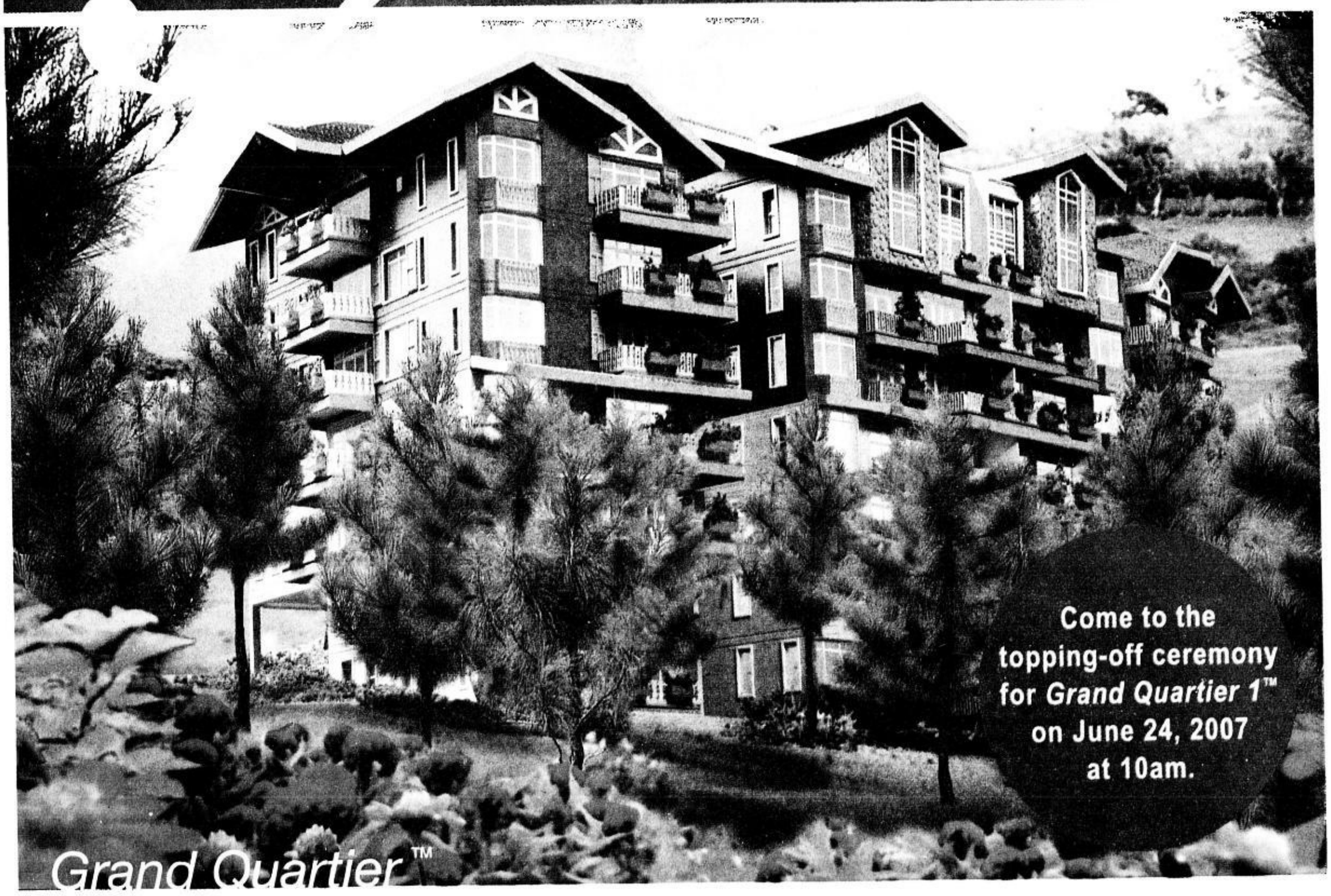
Monetary officials said the sustained rise in the GIR was due to robust inflows of foreign investments, remittances by overseas Filipino workers, income from investments abroad, and the central bank's earnings from its foreign exchange operations.

The BSP said the GIR in June was equivalent to 4.9 months' worth of imports of goods and payments for services. This marked a slight improve-

FOREX/ B4

Brittany BEAUTIFUL
A Vista Land Company





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For a property preview, call 850 2868 or 850 6986, or click www.brittany.com.ph

CROSSWINDS
Tagaytay

Ayala Land to raise ₱1.3B from rights offering

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

PROPERTY GIANT AYALA LAND INC. aims to raise roughly P1.3 billion from a stock rights offering of 13.03 billion preferred shares.

Proceeds from the stock rights will be used to fund ALI's various projects, sources added.

ALI's board also approved the increase in the company's authorized capital stock to P21.5 billion from P20 billion. The new capital will consist of 20 billion common shares at a par value of P1 a share and 15 billion preferred shares at 10 centavos each.

ALI is calling a special stockholders' meeting on Aug. 28 to ratify the capital increase.

Early in the year, ALI disclosed its aggressive plan to expand development into the residential, shopping mall, office and hotel businesses to take advantage of the property boom.

ALI officials had said the company has finalized a P16.2-billion budget for projects in 2007, of which 55 percent or P8.9 billion will go to 27 housing projects to be launched this year. This is the highest number of residential projects to be launched in the company's entire history and a 60-percent growth in the number of units offered in 2006, ALI president Jaime Ayala said.

ALI will venture out farther north of Manila such as in Bulacan and Pampanga. It will also launch projects in Taguig City, Canlubang in Laguna, Cavite, Antipolo, Bacolod and Iloilo.

Shopping centers will account for 24 percent or P3.9 billion of the company's budget for projects this year. The company has launched the 195,000-square meter "TriNoma," which is directly linked to the MRT North Edsa station in Quezon City.

ALI is also foraying into the fast-growing retail market in Pampanga as it starts construction this year of a P2-billion mall in Angeles City.

The Pampanga mall will sit on a 9.3-hectare lot and will offer 70,000 square meters in gross leasable space.

Also adding to ALI's leasable spaces this year are the first phase of Greenbelt 5 in Makati to be opened toward the end of the year and the first phase of an expanded area in Ayala Center Cebu in November.

New shopping centers will add 250,000 square meters of gross leasable space to ALI's portfolio.

ALI is also redeveloping the Ayala Center Glorietta mall area, which will entail stacking up new levels at the Glorietta area to pave the way for new office spaces for business process outsourcing firms as well as links to new hotels within the vicinity.

ALI earlier said it would develop a chunk of Ayala Center in the Makati business district into a luxury hotel complex in partnership with a Saudi-owned hotel and resort management company.

FPHC buys out Meralco partner

THE TAKEOVER BY FIRST PHILIPPINE Holdings Corp. (FPHC) of First Philippine Union Fenosa Inc. (FPUF), a major shareholder of Manila Electric Co. (Meralco), is seen to set the tone for pricing the government's stake in the power distributor, stock analysts said.

FPHC has agreed to buy the 40-percent stake held by Spain's Union Fenosa Internacional S.A. in joint venture firm FPUF for $250 million, subject to undisclosed conditions, FPHC said in a disclosure.

The acquisition is expected to be executed in 2008.

The balance of 60 percent in FPUF is controlled by FPHC.

FPUF owns 230.08 million shares in Meralco or 22.86 percent of the company's outstanding stock.

Sources said FPHC plans to finance the acquisition through its cash holdings and additional borrowings. Sources could not immediately disclose how much FPHC will borrow to fund the deal.

Ricardo Puig, head of research at Wealth Securities, said FPHC's buyout translates to roughly P125 a share, offering a 12-percent premium over Meralco's last traded price at P111 a share.

The national government is selling its 12-percent stake in Meralco and is urging other government agencies to unload their holdings jointly. Including pension funds and other government entities, the government holds 29 percent in Meralco.

At P125 a share, the sale of 12 percent in Meralco could fetch as much as P15.09 billion. The disposal of the entire 29 percent could generate for government roughly P36.47 billion.

FPHC had said it was interested in the government's 29-percent stake in Meralco. FPHC holds directly and indirectly 26 percent in Meralco.

"We're watching it. We're watching it closely. There are a lot of variables in the air. We don't know if the government will sell its full 29 percent but we're looking at it," FPHC president Elipidio Ibañez had said.

"Management (of Meralco) could be tilted (with the sale). That's why we have to watch the developments on who the buyers are," Ibañez said when asked what would make FPHC keen on bidding for the stake.

Meralco distributes electricity to about 4 million homes and businesses in the country and is valued at around $1.8 billion. *Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson*

CURRENCIES

July 6, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.735132	1.000000	46.1180
Japan	Yen	0.005983	0.008139	0.3754
United Kingdom	Pound	1.479380	2.012400	92.8079
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.094046	0.127931	5.8999
Switzerland	Franc	0.604003	0.821625	37.8917
Canada	Dollar	0.695884	0.946611	43.6558
Singapore	Dollar	0.483226	0.657333	30.3149
Australia	Dollar	0.629340	0.856091	39.4812
Bahrain	Dinar*	1.950107	2.652731	122.3386
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.196024	0.266652	12.2975
Brunei	Dollar	0.481643	0.655179	30.2155
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000082	0.000111	0.0051
Thailand	Baht	0.023790	0.032362	1.4925
UAE	Dirham	0.200156	0.272272	12.5566
EU	Euro	1.000000	1.360300	62.7343
Korea	Won	0.000798	0.001085	0.0500
China	Yuan**	0.096749	0.131607	6.0695
Argentina	Peso	0.237331	0.322841	14.8888
Brazil	Real	0.384342	0.522821	24.1115
Denmark	Kroner	0.134418	0.182849	8.4326
India	Rupee	0.018237	0.024808	1.1441
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.213391	0.290276	13.3869
Mexico	New Peso	0.068053	0.092573	4.2693
New Zealand	Dollar	0.576213	0.783822	36.1483
Norway	Kroner	0.126322	0.171836	7.9247
Pakistan	Rupee	0.012173	0.016559	0.7637
South Africa	Rand	0.104695	0.142416	6.5679
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.022422	0.030500	1.4066
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000343	0.000466	0.0215

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY time—July 5, 2007
* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen. ** Asian time closing rate as of July 5, 2007

Shares close 1.14% lower

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 1.14 PERCENT lower yesterday as investors took profits from Thursday's record-breaking run, with domestic political concerns weighing on sentiment, dealers said.

The composite index lost 43.48 points to 3,758.84 after trading between 3,757.29 and 3,822.41.

The all-shares index fell 24.10 points to 2,411.33.

There were 87 losers and 40 gainers, with 55 stocks unchanged.

Volume was 3.09 billion shares worth P4.2 billion.

Investors had turned cautious because prices were already "uncomfortably" high, said James Lago of Westlink Global Equities.

Some analysts said domestic political concerns might also have prompted investors to lock in profits and stay on the sidelines.

Headlines in local newspapers were mostly about the pending verdict over charges of gross corruption against former President Joseph Estrada.

But others said the market was probably just taking a breather and looking again for a strong base before testing new highs, with the outlook for the economy still bullish.

Top-traded Ayala Land fell 25 centavos to P17.75. The property developer announced late Thursday that its board had approved a stock rights offering of up to 13 billion preferred shares to all stockholders.

Shares in Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., the biggest Philippine company by market capitalization, were down P5 at P2,715.

First Philippine Holdings Corp. fell 50 centavos to P90.50, giving back gains made earlier in the session.

The company announced late Thursday that it would raise its stake in Manila Electric Co. (Meralco) by buying out Union Fenosa of Spain in a deal worth $250 million.

Meralco's A-shares, which only Filipinos can trade, rose a peso to P111 but its B-shares, which can be owned by Filipinos and foreigners alike, retreated a peso to P111.

Lago said: "The valuation for First Philippine Holdings is still attractive, but Meralco seems to be overstretched." *AFP*

NOTICE AND AGENDA

OF

ANNUAL MEETING OF REGULAR MEMBERS

Please be informed that the Annual Meeting of the Members of the Subic Bay Yacht Club will be held on Saturday, 21 July 2007 at 10:00 a.m. at the SBYC Clubhouse, Rizal Highway corner Burgos Street, Subic Bay Freeport Zone, Olongapo City. Members' registration begins at 9:00 a.m.

The agenda of the Meeting shall be as follows:

1. Proof of Notice
2. Proof of Quorum
3. Reading and approval of previous minutes
4. Report of the Commodore
5. Appointment of External Auditor
6. Ratification of the acts and resolutions of the Board of Directors and Management in the previous years
7. Amendment of Article V (Officers), Article VII Sec. 1 (Meetings of Regular Members), Article XI (Suspension and Expulsion) Article XIV (Miscellaneous Provisions) of the By-Laws
8. Election of Directors
9. Adjournment

The Organizational Meeting of the Board of Directors shall be held immediately upon adjournment of the Annual Meeting of the Members.

(Sgd.) ATTY. CANDIDO R. FLOR
Corporate Secretary

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of July 6, 2007)

52-WEEK HIGH	52-WEEK LOW	STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
		BANKS					
17.5	5.2	Asiatrust Development Bank Inc.	12.25	12.25	11.75	11.75	40,000
73	30.5	Banco de Oro-EPCI Inc.	73	73	71.5	72	499,800
73.5	47.5	Bank of the Philippine Islands	73	73	71.5	72	2,735,200
935	630	China Banking Corp.	915	915	915	915	1,090
20.25	18.18	Citystate Savings Bank	20.25	20.25	20.25	20.25	300
0.63	0.36	Export and Industry Bank, Inc	0.56	0.56	0.56	0.56	270,000
75.5	34	Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co.	73	73	71.5	72	2,365,100
65	32.5	Philippine National Bank	63	64	63	63	104,900
68	38.5	Philippine Savings Bank	63	64.5	63	64.5	2,400
39.57	14.13	Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	35.5	35.5	35	35	1,137,500
90	44	Security Bank Corp.	87.5	88	87.5	88	48,300
66	41.54	Union Bank of the Philippines	62.5	62.5	62	62	209,500
		OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
5.6	1.72	ATR KimEng Financial Corp.	4.8	5	4.8	5	245,000
1.5	0.6	Bankard Inc.	1.24	1.24	1.22	1.22	116,000
14.25	1.5	CitisecOnline.com Inc.	12.25	13	12.25	13	1,769,300
1.6	0.4	First Abacus Financial Holdings Corp.	1.24	1.32	1.22	1.24	4,403,000
42	28	First Metro Investment Corp.	42	42	42	42	900
1,710.00	1,500.00	Manulife Financial Corp.	1,685.00	1,690.00	1,685.00	1,690.00	2,220
5	4.05	National Reinsurance Corp. of the Phils.	4.35	4.4	4.3	4.3	2,332,000
3.1	0.99	PCI Leasing and Finance Inc.	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	86,000
1,005.00	210	The Philippine Stock Exchange, Inc	825	825	820	820	2,710
2,250.00	1,895.00	Sun Life Financial Inc.	2,170.00	2,170.00	2,170.00	2,170.00	10
1.94	1.2	iVantage Corp	1.84	1.84	1.82	1.82	1,215,000
		ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
68	41.5	First Gen Corp.	67	67	66.5	66.5	648,900
92	41	First Phil. Holdings Corp.	91	92	90.5	90.5	1,201,200
13.25	7.4	Manila Water Co. Inc.	12.75	12.75	12.5	12.75	4,065,200
116	14.5	Manila Electric Co. "A"	114	114	109	111	342,230
118	22.25	Manila Electric Co. "B"	115	117	111	111	1,524,500
6.8	4.1	PNOC Energy Development Corp.	5.7	5.8	5.5	5.7	13,933,000
6	3.7	Petron Corp.	6	6	5.8	5.9	7,566,000
2.5	1.6	Salcon Power Corp.	2.22	2.22	2.22	2.22	17,000
1.9	0.91	Trans-Asia Oil and Energy Dev't Corp.	1.5	1.58	1.5	1.58	2,940,000
		FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
6.3	2.85	Alaska Milk Corp.	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.9	100,000
2.95	1.88	Alliance Tuna International Inc.	2.3	2.3	2.24	2.24	756,000
28.5	19.5	Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	26.5	26.5	26	26	5,000
61	30.5	Jollibee Foods Corp.	56	56	55	55	818,100
7.3	4.6	Pancake House Inc.	7.3	7.3	7.3	7.3	3,000
1.9	0.77	RFM Corp.	1.68	1.68	1.64	1.68	243,000
4.05	2.2	Roxas Holdings	2.95	3	2.9	2.9	74,000
80	61	San Miguel Corp. "A"	76	76.5	75	75.5	559,600
88	69.5	San Miguel Corp. "B"	86.5	86.5	83.5	84	165,500
0.61	0.2	Swift Foods Inc.	0.48	0.48	0.48	0.48	20,000
4.3	2	Tanduay Holdings Inc.	4.3	4.3	4.25	4.25	75,000
22	15.25	Universal Robina Corp.	17.5	17.75	17.5	17.5	1,129,800
0.55	0.19	Vitarich Corp	0.5	0.5	0.45	0.49	1,480,000
		CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
6.1	1.43	EEI Corp.	5.7	5.8	5.7	5.8	815,000
4.6	1.06	Fortune Cement Corp.	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2	100,000
9.2	4.3	Holcim Philippines Inc.	8	8	7.9	8	3,106,000
7	1.2	Republic Cement Corp.	5.1	5.2	5.1	5.2	165,000
2	0.245	Southeast Asia Cement Holdings Inc	1.74	1.74	1.7	1.72	1,525,000
		CHEMICALS					
6.3	1.42	Chemrez Technologies Inc.	5.6	5.6	5.4	5.5	3,966,000
1.34	0.8	Interphil Laboratories Inc. "A"	1.34	1.34	1	1.3	203,000
1.4	0.61	Interphil Laboratories Inc. "B"	1.36	1.36	1.08	1.3	420,000
1.46	0.51	Mabuhay Vinyl Corp	1.2	1.2	1.18	1.18	645,000
		DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
0.44	0.0625	Picop Resources Inc.	0.37	0.37	0.36	0.36	4,020,000
		HOLDING FIRMS					
3.9	1.74	A. Soriano Corp.	3.65	3.65	3.65	3.65	287,000
0.17	0.023	AJO.net Holdings Inc.	0.14	0.14	0.13	0.13	52,860,000
1.28	0.18	APC Group Inc.	1.12	1.16	1.12	1.14	18,136,000
3.6	1.4	ATN Holdings Inc. "A"	2.2	2.5	2.16	2.5	9,180,000
3.3	1.48	ATN Holdings Inc. "B"	2.2	2.6	2.2	2.6	12,646,000
0.018	0.0065	Abacus Cons. Res. and Hold'gs Inc. "A"	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	25,200,000
9.7	4.85	Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc.	9.1	9.1	8.8	8.9	19,029,000
0.021	0.007	Alcorn Gold Resources Corp.	0.018	0.018	0.018	0.018	104,700,000
7.3	3.5	Alliance Global Group Inc.	5.9	6.1	5.9	6	20,409,000
1.38	0.47	Alsons Consolidated Resources Inc.	1.08	1.12	1.06	1.08	351,000
2.9	0.89	Anglo-Philippine Holdings Corp.	2.6	2.65	2.5	2.5	2,931,000
590	308.33	Ayala Corp.	585	585	565	565	247,900
14	6.96	Bacnotan Consolidated Industries Inc.	13.5	13.5	13.25	13.25	2,400
6.9	0.7	Batabac Resources and Holdings Co. Inc.	4.75	5.3	4.75	5	3,641,000
5.6	1.02	Benpres Holdings Corp.	5.2	5.4	5.1	5.2	9,303,000
9.8	3.25	DMCI Holdings Inc.	9.4	9.4	9.1	9.1	8,843,000
2.02	0.7	F and J Prince Holdings Corp. "A"	1.82	1.82	1.82	1.82	60,000
8	2.55	Filinvest Development Corp.	7.6	7.6	7.5	7.6	669,000
3.55	1.16	House of Investments Inc.	2.85	2.85	2.85	2.85	48,000
14.5	5.6	JG Summit Holdings Inc.	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5	7,000
0.8	0.185	MEDCO Holdings Inc.	0.51	0.52	0.51	0.52	740,000
0.95	0.1	Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.68	0.68	0.68	0.68	80,000
30	0.88	Magnum Holdings Inc.	24.75	24.75	23.5	23.5	467,000
11.5	0.26	Multitech Investments Corp.	9.8	9.8	9	9	4,633,000
5.4	1.2	PAL Holdings Inc.	4.85	5.1	4.8	4.85	1,920,000
0.055	0.009	Pacifica Inc. "A"	0.05	0.055	0.044	0.0525	1,024,300,000
0.75	0.16	Prime Orion Phillippines Inc.	0.61	0.61	0.59	0.59	2,580,000
2.02	1.2	Republic Glass Holdings Corp.	2.02	2.02	2.02	2.02	6,000
452.5	200.44	SM Investments Corp.	450	450	445	450	160,380
2.2	0.71	Seafront Resources Corp.	1.58	1.58	1.58	1.58	51,000
0.73	0.115	Sinophil Corp.	0.56	0.57	0.55	0.55	19,590,000
1.06	0.51	Solid Group Inc.	0.88	0.9	0.88	0.88	1,370,000
1.6	0.78	South China Resources Inc.	1.46	1.46	1.46	1.46	1,000
0.75	0.08	Wellex Industries Inc.	0.43	0.47	0.43	0.45	12,620,000
1.1	0.155	Zeus Holdings Inc	1	1	0.84	0.85	470,000
		PROPERTY					
2.16	0.75	A Brown Co. Inc.	1.7	1.7	1.66	1.66	1,392,000
1.06	0.3	Aranela Properties Inc.	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	400,000
19.25	9.58	Ayala Land Inc.	18.25	18.25	17.75	17.75	33,296,200
1.88	0.99	Belle Corp.	1.68	1.68	1.68	1.68	2,164,000
4.7	1.96	Cebu Holdings Inc.	4.45	4.45	4.4	4.45	34,000
4.6	1.6	City and Land Developers Inc.	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	20,000
2.9	1	Cityland Development Corp.	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	10,000
0.86	0.26	Crown Equities Inc.	0.83	0.86	0.82	0.84	23,500,000
0.83	0.18	Cyber Bay Corp.	0.59	0.59	0.56	0.56	5,610,000
3.25	0.72	Edsa Properties Holdings Inc.	3	3.1	3	3.05	50,000
0.99	0.44	Empire East Land Holdings Inc.	0.87	0.87	0.85	0.86	31,450,000
0.32	0.033	Ever Gotesco Resources and Hold'gs Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	6,290,000
1.38	0.38	Fil-Estate Land Inc.	1.24	1.24	1.2	1.2	14,110,000
2.44	0.99	Filinvest Land Inc.	2.2	2.22	2.14	2.18	32,054,000
0.41	0.065	Gotesco Land Inc. "A"	0.33	0.33	0.32	0.32	900,000
0.42	0.07	Gotesco Land Inc. "B"	0.34	0.34	0.32	0.33	900,000
2.4	0.74	Keppel Philippines Properties Inc.	2.36	2.4	2.36	2.4	70,000
0.69	0.2	Kuok Phil. Properties Inc.	0.44	0.47	0.44	0.46	2,490,000
1.12	0.18	MRC Allied Industries Inc.	0.97	0.98	0.96	0.97	3,090,000
4.4	1.28	Megaworld Corp.	4.1	4.15	4	4	43,553,000
6.4	1.5	Metro Pacific Investments Corp.	4.4	4.45	4.3	4.3	528,000
0.7	0.1	Phil. Estates Corp.	0.48	0.55	0.47	0.51	4,600,000
0.87	0.25	Philippine Realty and Holdings Corp.	0.67	0.67	0.64	0.64	17,570,000
9.2	1.1	Polar Property Holdings Corp.	6.5	6.5	6.4	6.5	50,000
23	10.5	Robinson Land Corp.	21.75	21.75	21	21.25	6,313,700
5.7	1.23	SM Development Corp.	5.6	5.6	5.4	5.6	788,000
13.25	5.92	SM Prime Holdings Inc.	13.25	13.25	12.5	12.5	4,962,900
1.34	0.51	Suntrust Home Developers Inc.	1	1	0.94	0.94	3,870,000
0.36	0.06	Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.27	0.27	1,380,000
7.4	3.65	Vista Land and Lifescapes Inc	6.8	6.8	6.6	6.7	1,606,000
		MEDIA					
35	15.75	ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp	32.5	35	32.5	35	591,900
		TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
2.12	1.16	Digital Telecommunications Phils. Inc.	1.58	1.58	1.54	1.56	6,924,000
1,445.00	900	Globe Telecom Inc.	1,400.00	1,400.00	1,390.00	1,395.00	63,330
2,820.00	1,790.00	Phil. Long Distance Telephone Co.	2,730.00	2,740.00	2,710.00	2,715.00	81,190
7.9	3.2	Pilipino Telephone Corp	7.3	7.3	7.1	7.2	7,465,000
		INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
0.39	0.17	Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.29	0.29	10,040,000
12	2	Diversified Financial Network Inc.	11	11	10.75	10.75	71,000
9.4	2	IPVG Corp.	9.2	9.4	9.1	9.1	4,656,000
0.065	0.0274	ISM Communications Corp.	0.049	0.049	0.048	0.048	66,600,000
25	5.5	Imperial Resources Inc. "A"	25	25	23.25	23.5	79,100
2.9	1.8	Ionics Inc.	2.16	2.16	2.16	2.16	50,000
0.185	0.04	Island Information and Technology Inc.	0.16	0.175	0.16	0.165	163,950,000
2.08	1.12	Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.7	1.72	1.68	1.72	130,000
0.0725	0.027	PhilWeb.Com Inc.	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	113,200,000
5.8	1	Transpacific Broadband Group Int'l. Inc	2.95	3.15	2.75	3	13,214,000
		TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
1.92	1.14	Aboitiz Transport System Corp	1.76	1.76	1.72	1.72	359,000
6.8	2.5	Asian Terminals Inc.	5.8	6.2	5.7	5.7	1,037,000
32	13.25	Int'l Container Terminal Services Inc.	29	29	28	28.5	773,300
2.14	0.86	Keppel Philippines Marine Inc.	2.08	2.08	2.02	2.02	550,000
2	0.8	Lorenzo Shipping Corp	1.82	1.98	1.78	1.98	391,000
		HOTEL & LEISURE					
16.5	3.8	Acesite (Phils.) Hotel Corp.	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.2	10,000
4.25	1.26	Leisure and Resorts World Corp.	3.75	3.75	3.65	3.65	727,000
6.6	2.7	Manila Jockey Club Inc.	6.3	6.6	6.1	6.1	98,000
4.55	2.8	Philippine Racing Club Inc.	4	4	3.3	3.35	2,005,000
0.98	0.18	Premiere Entertainment Productions Inc.	0.72	0.72	0.66	0.69	2,900,000
1.2	0.42	Waterfront Philippines Inc	0.94	0.95	0.94	0.94	1,210,000
		EDUCATION					
9.8	7.2	Centro Escolar University	7.8	7.8	7.8	7.8	5,000
3.7	2.65	iPeople Inc	3.3	3.3	3.25	3.25	110,000
		DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
5.9	1.9	Macroasia Corp.	5.2	5.6	5.2	5.3	4,423,000
17.25	13	Pacific Online Systems Corp.	15.5	15.75	15.25	15.5	392,900
30	9.9	Paxys Inc	23.5	23.5	23	23	125,000
		MINING					
0.018	0.0075	Abra Mining and Industrial Corp.	0.015	0.015	0.014	0.015	44,600,000
7.6	3	Apex Mining Co. Inc. "A"	5.7	5.9	5.7	5.8	211,000
7.7	3	Apex Mining Co. Inc. "B"	5.6	5.9	5.6	5.7	1,520,000
21.25	7.4	Atlas Cons. Mining and Dev't Corp.	17	17.25	16.75	17	7,175,900
14.25	8.7	Benguet Corp. "A"	12	12.5	12	12.5	52,200
5	1.7	Dizon Copper Silver Mines Inc.	4.3	4.3	4.2	4.2	46,000
3.05	0.0713	GEOGRACE Resources Philippines Inc.	3	3.05	2.85	2.9	28,824,000
0.35	0.215	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. "A"	0.28	0.28	0.27	0.28	5,570,000
0.42	0.225	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. "B"	0.32	0.32	0.31	0.32	4,930,000
0.038	0.017	Manila Mining Corp. "A"	0.032	0.032	0.032	0.032	231,600,000
0.041	0.019	Manila Mining Corp. "B"	0.034	0.034	0.033	0.033	76,000,000
0.024	0.008	Omico Corp.	0.018	0.019	0.018	0.018	187,300,000
6.4	3.15	Philex Mining Corp.	5.8	5.8	5.6	5.7	3,172,000
35	14.75	Semirara Mining Corp.	32	35	32	34.5	612,000
1.36	0.35	United Paragon Mining Corp.	1.02	1.02	0.98	0.98	370,000
1.8	0.52	Vulcan Industrial and Mining Corp	1.4	1.4	1.32	1.34	1,788,000
		OIL					
0.58	0.25	Basic Petroleum Corp.	0.44	0.47	0.44	0.45	5,020,000
0.025	0.0095	Oriental Pet. and Minerals Corp. "A"	0.023	0.023	0.022	0.022	144,500,000
0.027	0.01	Oriental Pet. and Minerals Corp. "B"	0.024	0.024	0.023	0.023	37,600,000
14.25	9	Petroenergy Resources Corp.	10.25	10.75	10	10.25	1,217,400
0.028	0.0089	The Philodrill Corp.	0.024	0.025	0.023	0.024	234,600,000

BY INQUIRER RESEARCH SOURCE: TECHNISTOCK

Gov't expenses cut by P42B in H1, low rates cited

Lower-than-expected spending helped rein in deficit

By Michelle V. Remo

THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT spent P41.9 billion less than what it programmed in the first half, thus helping rein in the budget deficit, according to preliminary data from the Department of Finance.

According to the fiscal program for the year, the government should have spent P589.3 billion as of June for operations, infrastructure, social services and other expenditures.

But the initial count showed that it had spent only P547.4 billion during the period.

This was attributed mainly to the strong peso and the low interest rates, which reduced the government's debt servicing costs.

As a result, the budget deficit in the first half was estimated to have stood at just P37.7 billion.

Had the government spent as programmed, then the deficit (the difference between revenues and expenses) would have reached P79.6 billion, breaching the full-year target of P63 billion.

The cut in expenses, however, failed to make up for the anemic tax collection during the period, thus the budget deficit as of June is expected to exceed the limit of P31.3 billion.

Both the Bureau of Internal Revenue and the Bureau of Customs, the government's two largest revenue earners, failed to meet their respective collection goals.

But Finance Secretary Margarito Teves stressed that the under-spending in the first half was not deliberate.

He denied that the government had directed its line agencies to restrain spending because the government could not meet its revenue collection targets.

Teves said the government preferred to spend as programmed despite difficulty in meeting revenue goals.

Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya Jr. earlier said, however, that some government agencies were having difficulty spending their budget allocations due to various factors, including tedious procurement processes.

Economic managers of the Arroyo administration earlier urged government agencies to increase spending, especially for infrastructure, to make the country at par with its neighbors in terms of attracting foreign investments.

The amount spent for infrastructure accounts for less than 3 percent of the country's gross domestic product, compared to the average of 5 percent for neighboring countries.

Asahi goes for Asian export market

By Ronnel W. Domingo

ASAHI GLASS PHILIPPINES YESTERday said it had taken a new name and symbol as it prepares to make its factory in Pasig City one of the group's export hubs in Asia.

Now known as AGC Flat Glass Philippines or AGPH, the company is the only subsidiary of Tokyo-based Asahi Glass Co. Ltd. (AGC) producing solar glass covers in Asia.

Solar glass covers are used in making flat plate solar collectors, which convert solar energy into electricity.

"We are producing solar glass covers at full capacity or 200,000 square meters monthly," said AGC president Emmanuel Y. Go in an interview.

Go added that AGPH was also churning out other products at capacity volumes, including float glass and figured glass and mirrors that are needed in various industries like construction and automotive.

Through AGC's globally-orchestrated production scheme and support affiliates in the United States, Belguim, Japan and others, AGPH also produces specialty products such as coated glass, fire-resistant glass, tempered glass, laminated glass and double-glazed glass.

Asked whether AGPH has plans to increase its production capacity, Go said this would depend on the market situation although "small units" were being added to the factory in Pasig City.

"These (equipment) are meant to add higher value to our products," Go explained. "AGPH has so far spent P70 million on such units."

Also, Go said that AGPH has been undertaking production tests on flat panel displays for plasma and liquid crystal display television sets.

AGPH executive vice president Naoki Arai said the Philippines was only the third of AGC's production bases in Asia to produce flat panel displays after Japan and Thailand.

Demand is strong for this product and AGPH expects to go into commercial production soon to augment the AGC network's output in Asia, Arai said.

The company's new name is its fourth since it started as Republic Glass Corp., the country's pioneering flat glass manufacturer.

Through a joint venture with AGC, the firm became Republic Asahi Glass Corp. in 1990 and Asahi Glass Philippines in 2001 when AGC attained full ownership.

Go said the renaming coincided with AGC's centennial and was part of a worldwide move to unify the group's brand from three separate brands—Glaverbel in Europe, American Flat Glass in the Americas and Asahi in Asia.

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HALL OF FAMERS. Loida Nicolas Lewis, chair and CEO of multinational food company TLC Beatrice International Holdings Inc. (left), has been inducted to the Asian Hall of Fame. Inducted with her is Olympic skating champion and "Dancing with the Stars" champion Apolo Anton Ohno. The Asian-Americans were recognized for their contribution to the community.

DA to expand abaca plantations by 2010

By Amy R. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRIculture plans to expand abaca plantations by 50,000 hectares by 2010 to maintain the Philippines' status as the world's biggest producer of the famous "Manila hemp."

The Philippines currently accounts for 85 percent of the world's abaca fiber supply, with the remaining 15 percent coming from Ecuador.

Abaca plantations were already expanded by close to 20,000 hectares in 2005 and 2006, with another 30,000 hectares to be added over the next four years, said Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap.

Fiber Industry Development Authority Administrator Cecilia J. Soriano said in an interview that initial investments in abaca expansion may cost as much as P42,000 a hectare.

But once established, an abaca plantation can be productive for up to 20 years at minimal maintenance cost.

The planned expansion can help the country achieve its "optimum abaca production," which Soriano placed at around 85,000 metric tons a year.

Last year, the abaca sector produced a low of 67,000 metric tons due to the typhoons that hit the country in the last semester.

"Most of the plantations being established are in areas free from abaca diseases and are not frequently visited by typhoons," Yap said.

The abaca-producing provinces in Bicol and Eastern Visayas were the most affected by viral diseases and typhoons last year.

The expansion is seen to address the "notable lack of supply" of this indigenous material, as renowned designer Cora Jacob had pointed out during a recent dialogue among government officials, abaca farmers and stakeholders.

She has designed for fashion houses Yves Saint Laurent, Christian Dior and Givenchy.

On the government's part, the DA had pledged to support abaca production through various projects, which FIDA is currently implementing on top of its flagship abaca expansion program.

These include programs to rehabilitate typhoon-damaged abaca areas; produce planting materials; promote the product and eradicate disease.

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For Davao exec, strong peso spells gains

BPO firms consider moving to greener pastures

By Germelina Lacorte
Inquirer Mindanao

DAVAO CITY—A STRONG PESO may threaten operations of call centers in Metro Manila, but it can help the economy of other regions, a ranking trade official here said.

Teodulo Pasawa, city director of the Department of Trade and Industry, said a stronger currency could push more call centers to relocate to other regions and take advantage of the cheaper pool of English-proficient workers.

The peso yesterday closed at P46.08 to the dollar. Pasawa said the peso's gains over the past months had caught many call center companies flatfooted.

"Since most of them quote their labor expenses in dollars, this may force them to look for other alternatives outside of Metro Manila to cut down on cost," he said.

A number of call centers have already expanded in the provinces, including this city.

Pasawa said the option of totally moving out of Metro Manila would greatly help the companies address their losses.

"Some companies had earlier told me that they would leave Metro Manila if they could realize a 20-percent savings in Davao, but that was before the exchange rate went down by 40 percent," he said.

"Now that the peso has strengthened against the dollar, call centers may be rethinking about relocating or expanding to areas outside of Metro Manila, where their operations are largely concentrated."

Pasawa said the city was ready to accommodate call center companies because of the existence of several information and communications technology (ICT) parks.

One of them, Damosa IT Park in Barangay Lanang, has been accredited by the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (Peza).

Call centers putting up facilities in Peza-accredited zones enjoy duty-free importation of capital goods and can hire foreign nationals, Pasawa said.

Although the other ICT-ready facilities here are available for call centers, they have yet to get Peza accreditation.

Pasawa said the projected expansion projects and relocation of more call centers here would provide fresh opportunities for job seekers in Davao.

Earlier, the ICT cluster of the Regional Development Council (RDC) had forecast over P1 billion in ICT investments in Southern Mindanao by 2010.

The investments may translate to about 16,000 jobs.

SMC to put up grain centers for corn

By Amy R. Remo

FOOD AND BEVERAGE GIANT San Miguel Corp. has firmed up its commitment to put up 10 grain centers for corn, Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap said.

"There is already a meeting of the minds," Yap told reporters. "San Miguel liked what they have seen when they visited two grain centers in South Cotabato and agreed to the concept."

Although Yap declined to comment on the total investment, he said the DA and San Miguel are already identifying possible sites.

Earlier, Agriculture Assistant Secretary Dennis Araullo estimated that a grain center could cost up to P500 million. With 10 centers to be put up, total investment could reach P5 billion.

Araullo also had identified 10 sites—in Quirino, Cagayan province, Isabela, Occidental Mindoro, Saranggani, Pampanga, Bukidnon, Maguindanao, Pangasinan and North Cotabato—as possible locations for the grain centers, each having its own silos, dryers and shellers.

Yap said he had met with San Miguel chair Danding Cojuangco and president and CEO Ramon Ang to discuss this joint venture about a week ago.

"What I'm happy about is that Ramon Ang said we have to enter this big because, in the commodities business, you have to be a volume player," Yap explained. "If not, we can't bring down prices nor can we have corn self-sufficiency."

San Miguel buys yellow corn for its broiler and aquatic feeds business. Its purpose for putting up the grain centers is to help stabilize corn prices. At farmgate, corn costs almost P13 a kilo.

Yap said San Miguel proposed that they would put up silos and storage facilities while the DA would concentrate on opening new areas for corn production to assure adequate corn supply and maximize use of the centers.

18 firms seen to vie for Calaca coal plant

THE POWER SECTOR ASSETS and Liabilities Management Corp. has announced that 18 parties had expressed interest to take part in a third round of bidding for the Calaca power plant in Batangas.

The 600-megawatt coal-fired facility continues to attract investors despite failure of two previous auctions.

Psalm said in a statement that nine prospective bidders were foreign companies, including five from the United Kingdom and Europe and four from the Asia-Pacific.

The agency is mandated under the Electric Power Industry Reform Act to dispose of the power plants of the National Power Corp. and transmission facilities of the National Transmission Corp., as well as settle both firms' financial obligations.

Psalm said it was scheduled to hold a pre-bid conference for the 18 firms on July 18, while the auction itself is set within the year.

Consisting of two 300-MW generating units, the Calaca facility is primarily designed to run as a base-load plant—one that runs round-the-clock—and can operate to regulate the power network's frequency at a minimum stable load of 150 MW a unit.

Also, both units are designed for plant redundancy, which means that one unit can undergo maintenance without affecting the plant's full output.

The Calaca plant was first offered to investors in May 2005, but the auction was canceled after two of three qualified bidders backed out shortly before the deadline for submission of offers.

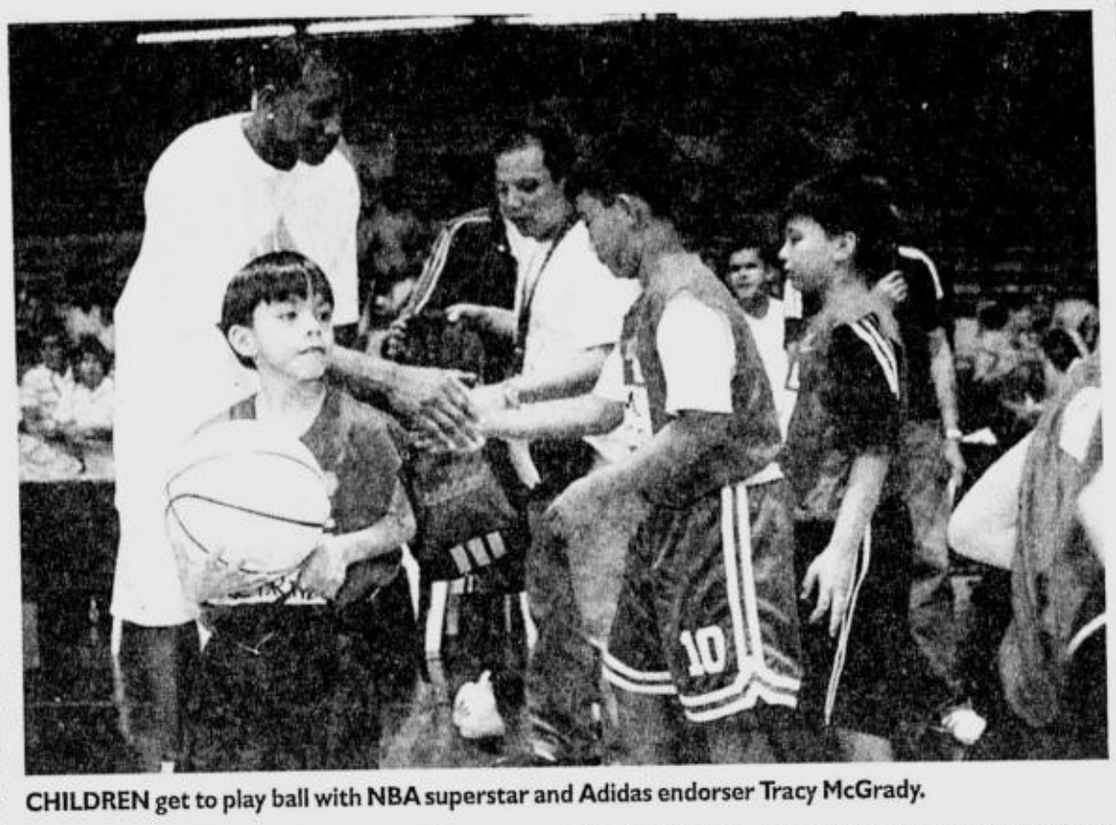
The second round of bidding held in April 2006 was also declared a failure because the price proposals submitted by the two bidders were below the floor price of $288 million.

Psalm president Jose Ibazeta said that his agency was reviewing the floor price of the facility, as more power supply deals would be attached to it soon.

Psalm vice president Froilan Tampinco, who is in charge of asset management and electricity trading, had said the agency was expecting a "substantial" power supply contract to be attached to the facility. *Ronnel W. Domingo*

Gawad Kalinga gets sporting hand from Adidas

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao



CHILDREN get to play ball with NBA superstar and Adidas endorser Tracy McGrady.

ADIDAS, ONE OF THE WORLD'S biggest sports equipment and apparel manufacturers, believes it can help make the world a better place through sports.

It is doing just that in the Philippines by committing to undertake the sports development component in a number of communities under the ambit of Gawad Kalinga, one of the country's leading forces in mass housing.

Under the program, Adidas will bankroll the construction of sports facilities in communities, such as basketball, badminton or volleyball courts, and provide the balls and other equipment.

More importantly, Adidas will also invest in the training of coaches and referees so that the communities will eventually be able to hold tournaments on their own. These events serve to strengthen the ties that bind families living in the Gawad Kalinga communities.

Mini-Olympics

Adidas first got involved with Gawad Kalinga in May when it held a mini-Olympics to promote sportsmanship and camaraderie among the families.

From then on, Adidas decided to do more projects with the housing organization.

Joey E. Singian, managing director of Adidas Philippines Inc., tells the INQUIRER in an interview that the prospect of harnessing the time and talent of employees to mount sports activities for urban poor communities was what drew Adidas to the project.

"It was difficult at first to get the employees to sacrifice their weekends to be with the communities, but once they start the volunteer work and see how they contribute, it becomes easier," Singian says. "Some have even started bringing their families with them."

Aside from employees, Adidas will also involve its pool of endorsers, mostly basketball players, to hold training camps and sports clinics for community members.

Endorsers

Adidas' pool of endorsers include basketball coaches Ryan Gregorio and Ronnie Magsanoc and players Wesley Gonzales, Doug Kramer, Eric Villanueva, JC Intal, Chris Tiu and Larry Fonacier.

They are also there to inspire and motivate the Gawad Kalinga community members to embrace sports.

Adidas will initially concentrate its resources on four Gawad Kalinga communities, starting with the one in Brookside, Filinvest, Quezon City, but hopes to adopt more communities as its budget and human resources allow.

Adidas will first reach out to communities near its office in Pasig to make it easier for employees to go there and volunteer their time.

Singian says Adidas wants to go to as many communities as possible because it firmly believes that exposing people, especially children, to sports helps them develop the right set of values.

"People exposed to sports at a young age develop different values, such as teamwork and perseverance to get through tough times because, in sports, they have to train and work hard," he says.

For the adults, having top-quality sports equipment carrying the Adidas brand will also give them fun and worthwhile activities to look forward to, keeping them away from the temptations of drink and drugs.

CORPORATE CITIZEN

Singian says Adidas has also decided to link with Gawad Kalinga to put more structure into its sports development program, which it considers a critical part of its operations in the Philippines.

More focused

"We were not too organized before and we get all these requests for sports equipment and facilities," Singian says. "With Gawad Kalinga, we can be more focused."

Adidas, however, will continue to hold pocket sports events in other communities, such as those sponsored by the Ateneo de Manila University.

He says Adidas has not been in these communities for too long, and yet changes are already taking place.

"I believe that there really is a big transformation in the communities, I hope that values learned through sports will inspire the kids to make something even better for themselves," he says.

ADIDAS employees volunteer their time to teach members of a Gawad Kalinga community.

In Benguet, vegetable vans secure food lane

By Delmar Cariño
Inquirer Northern Luzon

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET—Operators of trucks and vans that haul vegetable products daily from the Cordillera's biggest trading post here to major markets in Metro Manila and Southern Luzon have created a food lane that has inspired the opening of markets in other provinces, industry leaders said.

"The freight business is actually a vital component of the Department of Agriculture's food security program," said Benito Hipolito, president of the Benguet Traders and Truckers Association (BTTA). "Without trucks, Manila's wholesale market will collapse."

Hipolito cited as example the opening of *bagsakan* areas (drop-off points) in Villasis town and Urdaneta City, both in Pangasinan. That event expanded the market for vegetables, he said.

According to BTTA records, 75 trucks haul vegetables daily from here to Metro Manila, transporting a daily average of 2.5 million kilos of vegetables. The volume represents 65 percent of Metro Manila's daily vegetable requirement.

Most vegetables are delivered to the public markets of Balintawak, Quezon City, and Divisoria, Manila—the biggest, most accessible *bagsakan* areas in Metro Manila.

Trucks belonging to BTTA members are different from those that deliver vegetables to Urdaneta.

"Urdaneta has become a major distribution market of highland vegetables for Pangasinan and the nearby provinces," said Emily Ugay, president of the BTTA Urdaneta cluster.

Hipolito said the freight business is committed to deliver highland vegetables to other provinces, rain or shine.

Bottled sardines, corn coffee are bestsellers in Mindanao trade fair

By Ronnel W. Domingo

BOTTLED SARDINES AND RICE and corn coffees were the bestsellers during the Yamang Mindanao One Town One Product (Otop) Island Fair, ringing up a total of P28 million in sales, the Department of Trade and Industry reported.

Held in General Santos City from June 29 to July 2, this year's edition of the annual trade show also provided business leads for rural small-scale ventures that are planning to expand to markets overseas through business matching sessions.

Trade Undersecretary Carissa Cruz-Evangelista said Yamang Mindanao was being institutionalized as one of the biggest trade fairs in the country. The DTI said it had logged a huge number of inquiries from entrepreneurs asking how to take part in it.

"The fair featured an array of products that include processed foods, jewelry, fashion accessories, furniture, garments, handicraft and many other items that drew both foreign and domestic institutional buyers," Cruz-Evangelista said.

Top food sellers in the exhibit included YY Sea International Corp. from Zamboanga, which took bulk orders from a company in China for its bottled Spanish sardines; Sunnish Coffee of Caraga Region for its rice and corn beverage; and KM Foods of Southwestern Mindanao for its tuna products.

In the nonfood category, top sellers were South Sea pearl crafter Tezoro del Mar, K6D Infinite Fashion and furniture maker Wild Trend Woodcraft.

Also, fair organizers cited exhibitor De Lara Agsam Novelties of Caraga for having the best non-food product in the fair—a necklace made of woven agsam vine and rattan strips laid with pearl.

Another top producer was Top Zion Handicrafts, also of Caraga, for its rug made from abaca bark and fiber.

In the food category, the best product citation went to Lucille's Food Products for its calamansi carrot concentrate.

Second-best food products were the organic rice of Magsaysay Farmers' Multi Purpose Cooperative and YY Sea International Corp.'s bottled Sabroso Spanish-style sardines.

Evangelista, who is also national manger of the Otop program, said that some 1,090 entrepreneurs had invested a total of 1.89 billion in 2006, generating some 70,609 jobs and P1.81 billion domestic revenues as well as $92.23M in export sales.

The GenSan show was held following the Boracay Otop fair in June, which represented the Otop showcase for the Visayas.

In August, a similar trade show would be held at the SM Megamall Megatrade Hall, which would serve as the promotional event for Otop in Luzon.

Forex reserves hit $26.4B . . .

From page B1

ment from the 4.8 months recorded in May.

The latest GIR figure was also equivalent to 5.3 times the country's short-term, foreign currency-denominated debt based on original maturity and 2.8 times based on residual maturity.

Short-term debt based on residual maturity refers to outstanding external debt with original maturity of one year or less, plus principal payments on medium- and long-term loans of the public and private sectors falling due within the next 12 months.

In May, the GIR was only enough to cover 5.1 times the amount of short-term, external debt based on original maturity and 2.7 times based on residual maturity.

The BSP said in a statement that the growing GIR could have been higher had the national government and the BSP not engaged in the prepayment of their respective foreign currency-denominated loans.

The BSP prepaid $850 million worth of debts in March and April although these liabilities were still scheduled to fall due in October. The national government redeemed $126 million worth of Brady bonds in the first half that were supposed to mature in June 2018.

Of the GIR as of June, $23.05 billion was placed in foreign currency-denominated investments. The balance was in the form of gold and special drawing rights (SDRs), the currency used by the International Monetary Fund.

The government's economic managers attributed the surge in foreign capital inflows partly to an improving economic environment. One of the beneficiaries of the resurging interest among foreign investors in the Philippines is the stock market, which has been hitting historical highs.

The Arroyo administration had cited the robust growth in the first quarter, which it said was helping in making investors take a look at income-generating opportunities in the country.

The Philippine economy, as measured by its gross domestic product, grew 6.9 percent in the first quarter, its strongest performance in 17 years.

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People, Events & Products

Editor Aries Espinosa

Building Green 2007 in Market! Market!

A "GREEN THUMB" IS NOT NECESSARILY A requirement to support the Philippine Green Building Council. For those not in the real estate industry, Building Green may mean nothing more than a call to plant more trees: A common misinformation. As an "emerging council" which started only March of this year, the PhilGBC hopes that through events like the Building Green 2007 exhibit held at the Activity Center of Market! Market!, last June 26-28, they increase public awareness and spark a green revolution in the real estate industry.

So, what is this so called green revolution in the real estate industry all about? It is the global trend of transforming design, construction, and management methods of the building industry into practices that are safe, healthy, and environmentally and socially responsible. As the non-stock, non-profit organization recognized by the World Green Council, the Philippine Green Building Council acts as the catalyst for building and construction industry leaders from both the public and private sector to share knowledge on eco-friendly building practices to ensure a sustainable environment. With sustainable development - the objective of Green Building - in mind at all times throughout the entire building process, PhilGBC advocates the use of enduring passive designs that work around the climate and other natural conditions to provide good air quality, conserve energy, reduce waste, and keep electricity bills at a minimum. Not only do such work and living environments promote safety, it also ensures comfort. By providing good air quality, enviro-friendly buildings make sense not only for the health of our planet and the health of the people but also the health of the bottom line. That's already tripling your return of investment!

Architect Christopher dela Cruz, chair of the Philippine Green Building Council, says that most of green building technologies are already available in the Philippines but are very expensive. However, he is positive that as demand increases - as a result of the awareness created by PhilGBC campaigns - costs of products and technology will be significantly reduced in the future.

At present, PhilGBC is forming an alliance with developers, contractors, suppliers, designers, civil society, academe, building professional associations, financial institutions, and individual practitioners to jointly develop a nationally accepted green building rating standard. The Green Building principles are also being integrated in housing projects of the government.

Buying a house? Choose "green." Contact the Philippine Green Building Council (PhilGBC) through architect Christopher dela Cruz at 0927-3122052 / 400-3041 or log on to http://philgbc.org.

PHILAM PLANS SIGNS NEW CBA WITH EMPLOYEES

Philam Plans Inc, the country's leading pre-need company providing pension, education and life plans, and its rank-and-file employees covered by the Association of Philam Plans Employees (APPES) Union recently concluded negotiations for a new three-year Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) for 2007 to 2009. Photo shows Philam Plans president and CEO Jack I. Howell (seated, right) and APPES chair Geronimo A. Macalintal (seated, left) during the formal CBA Signing at the Philam Plans Boardroom. They are joined by members of Philam Plans' management panel led by SVP - plan operations group Reynaldo T. Gatcheco Jr (standing, 2nd from right), SVP and CFO Amelita M. Intalan (standing, 5th from left), SAVP - branch operations division Nestor Leonard E. Jularbal (standing, 7th from left), legal counsel Sergio M. Ceniza (standing, 2nd from left) and AVP - human resources Ma. Louzel L. Diaz (standing, 5th from right). Representing APPES are (standing, left): Rene Garcia; Rowel N. Cagungao; Bernadette Biacora; Erlinda Ricarte; Sonia P. Macalintal; Juanita Sebuano; Manolo V. Llanto and vice chair Erwin E. Ranot.

IS DIABETES IN YOUR FUTURE?

Diabetes continues to be a growing health problem across the globe. Currently, there are more than 194 million people with diabetes worldwide. It is expected that this figure could exceed 333 million by year 2025, if left untreated. The good news is a new breakthrough medicine for type-2 diabetes was recently launched by pharmaceutical company Merck Sharp & Dohme (MSD) Philippines. Belonging to the newest class called DPP-4 inhibitors, MSD's sitagliptin works by enhancing the incretin system, allowing the body to control its blood sugar levels naturally. Photo shows (from left): Karen Villanueva, MSD external affairs director; guest speakers Dr. Araceli Panelo, executive director of the Institute for the Studies of Diabetes Foundation and Dr. Elizabeth Paz-Pacheco, past president of the Philippine Society of Endocrinology and Metabolism; and Maru Quindimil, MSD business unit director. For more information, call the diabetes hotline: 634-3333.

COLLIERS INT'L RECEIVES AWARD FROM BSP

Last July 4 at the Assembly Hall, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) Complex, Manila, Colliers International's Research and Consultancy has been recognized at the Awarding Ceremony and Appreciation Lunch for 2007 BSP Stakeholders entitled, 'Sustaining Partnership for Progress.' BSP chose Colliers International for providing timely data and analysis through their market reports. Shown are (from left): Vicente B. Valdepeñas Jr., Monetary board member and chair of the board of judges; Richard Raymundo, director of Colliers International's reserach and consultancy; Amando M. Tentangco, Jr., BSP Governor. For more information on Colliers International Property Market Reports/Overviews please visit their website at www.colliers.com.

37 Tips to Pass any College Entrance Exam the Sure Way

NOWADAYS, MOST PARENTS DREAM THEIR CHILdren to study in prestigious universities like UP, Ateneo, De La Salle and UST. And all of them know that to qualify to these universities, their children have to take rigid entrance exams. This is exactly the reason why numerous review centers have sprung up giving hope to parents that their children will get the edge over others. However, most review centers try to squeeze four years worth of lessons in a span of few days or weeks thus loading students with so much knowledge and information. The key to passing all entrance exams is actually a combination of the following: knowledge, physiology, time management and confidence. The 37 Tips Seminar tackles high-impact techniques that top students use and is presented in a manner that any student can easily understand. In the seminar, students will be taught techniques such as: scanning the entire test first to save time, secrets of properly eliminating incorrect choices, etc. Not only will students be taught these tips, the seminar also has a workshop that would immediately put these tips into practice for some problems that have appeared in college entrance exams and PRC board exams. The 37 Tips to Pass any College Entrance Exam the Sure Way seminar will be held on July 14 at Los Baños, Laguna. For more info, contact 0906-4682446 or (049)536-4851.

'Meet and Greet' Masked Rider Blade

BANDAI AND BANKEE TRADING INVITE ALL KIDS TO MEET AND GREET Masked Rider Blade from the Masked Rider Blade series this July in Toy Kingdom, Toy Express, Toys 'R Us, Toytown, Kidzstation and Rustans branches in Metro Manila. Log on to www.bankee.com.ph for the meet and greet schedules. The main Meet & Greet event on July 29, at the Grand Atrium of Shangri-La Plaza Mall will feature activities for kids like fan art contest, coloring activity, video game play, film showing, games and raffle. Kids of all ages are sure to be amazed by the Masked Rider exhibit featuring Masked Rider limited toys, action figures and other Masked Rider accessories courtesy of Masked Rider collectors. Catch Masked Rider Blade series in Cartoon Network every weekend at 8:30 a.m. with replays at 7:30 p.m.

Electrolux Design Lab 2007

ELECTROLUX DESIGN LAB 2007, FOR ITS 5TH ANNUAL COMPETITION, invites design students around the world to present their ideas for eco-friendly and sustainable household appliances and solutions for 2020. The goal is to go above and beyond simple energy and water efficiency and suggest ways to foster sustainable behavior and product usage. The location for this year's Design Lab event is Paris. Design Lab 2007 has a first prize of 5,000 euro and a 6-month internship at one of Electrolux global design centers. An international jury will judge the entries based on intuitive design, innovation, consumer insight and the ability to promote sustainable development for the future. Entries must be submitted by Aug. 1, via Internet at www.electroluxdesignlab.com. A limited number of finalists will be chosen by the end of September and invited to Paris to make a final presentation to the jury in late November and where the winner will be announced and prizes awarded.

The Edward J. Nell Company get-together

ALL ROADS LEAD TO VALLE VERDE COUNTRY CLUB IN PASIG FOR THE weekly get-together of former employees of The Edward J. Nell Company (Intramuros office) today. No less than former Nell mining engineer and currently president of Philex Mining Company, Ernie Villaluna is inviting all his former co-employees to plan for the first ever Grand Reunion of The Edward J. Nell Company, once the country's machinery dealer industry leader during the 60s and 70s. A fun-filled day of fellowship, videoke singing and dancing, parlor games , raffle prizes galore are expected to draw the attention of Nell retirees. For further details, former Nell employees may contact any of the following and submit their names and contact numbers to Taling Javier (419-5392), Heidi Ronquillo-Linsangan (842-7526), Efren Aranzamedez (825-9973), Enya Gomez (412-4325) or Gerry Angeles (943-6963).

Transformers invades Jollibee

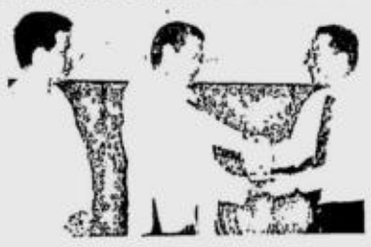
THERE'S MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE WITH JOLLIBEE KIDS MEAL'S LATEST offering - Transformers The Movie: Robots in Disguise! Transform and roll out with Optimus Prime, who changes from a cargo truck into the Autobot Leader. Change Megatron from a menacing airship into the Decepticon leader. Ride into action with Bumblebee, who transforms from a yellow road racer into a powerful ally in the war against the Decepticons. Barricade is out to enslave the humans of Earth, transforming from a menacing black squad car into a fearsome robot. Collect all four toys. Each figure doubles as a cup topper for any 12 oz. cup. Get them with every Jollibee Kids Meal from June 24 to July 12. Choose from any of the four Jollibee Kids Meal options (Yumburger, Jollibee Spaghetti, Burger Steak, and Chickenjoy) and bring home the action of Transformers The Movie: Robots in Disguise!

Monitor food and beverage intake of children

PARENTS SHOULD PROVIDE THE RIGHT SUPPLEMENTARY VITAMINS AND minerals for their children by choosing the right food and drinks to ensure their children's proper mind and body development. One such product is Jus' 4 Kids, a health drink formulated specifically for children. It is the only juice for kids with Taurine and CGF, which are mind and growth enhancing nutrients. Developed by pharmaceutical firm Sydenham Laboratories Inc, Jus'4Kids has been approved by the DOH, through its Sangkap Pinoy Seal Program, and the Bureau of Food and Drug Administration. It was also cited by prestigious UK-based International publication, Beverage Innovation. Jus' 4 Kids is fortified with Vitamin A, C, E, Zinc and Iodine-micronutrients that have a profound impact on the growth of children. The orange flavor, Zzooom!, contains CGF, which promotes growth and the mango flavor, Smart Up!, contains Taurine, for brain development. Adequate intake of these micronutrients is crucial for both the physical and cognitive development of children. Jus' 4 Kids is available at leading supermarkets including SM, Robinsons, Puregold, Shopwise, Waltermart, South, Landmark, Cherry, Ever, and other secondary outlets.

PUEBLO NAMED LEADING DEVELOPER IN REGION X

Pueblo de Oro Development Corp (PODC) was awarded as the Leading Developer for Economic Housing and the Leading Developer for Open Market Housing for Region X by Vice President Noli de Castro, Chair of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council, and Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board (HLURB) Chief Executive Officer and Commissioner Romulo Q. Fabul during the recent HLURB Real Estate Development Awards Ceremony. PODC VP for operations Crisostomo F. Bate accepted the award in behalf of Pueblo de Oro. PODC is the developer of the 360-hectare Pueblo de Oro Township, the biggest mixed-use facility in Cagayan de Oro. The master plan, which was designed by Louis Berger International, integrates first-class residential subdivisions with commercial areas, a championship golf course, and school.



INSTANT REMEDY FOR YOUR ACHES AND PAINS

Dr. Christian Emmanuel Mancao, a Filipino chronic muscle pain specialist and founder of the Mancao Myotherapy Clinic, a center for chronic muscle pain management (tel. no. 687-6174) is shown treating a patient, lawyer Manuel Jimenez. Dr. Mancao has invented the 'Mancao Myofascial Release', a 15-minute manipulation of the upper and lower extremities that immediately relieves or dramatically reduces pains in patients suffering from chronic muscle pain syndromes in just 1 to 15 seconds. For the past 13 years, he has helped a lot of people here and abroad with migraine, neck, shoulder and back pain, scoliosis, bronchial asthma and many other ailments. His clinic is at room 1028, Megaplaza Bldg., ADB Avenue corner Garnet St., Ortigas Center, Pasig City.

R&B PRINCE JAY-R RENEWS CONTRACT WITH SUN

Sun Cellular recently renewed the contract of Jay-R as its endorser for 2007. And because of his extremely vibrant personality, Sun continues to use Jay-R's appeal and charm to endorse its various offerings and promotions. His fun, energetic, and warm persona has captured the hearts of his many fans, much like the way Sun has endeared itself to its ever-growing subscribers - making him a perfect fit for Sun Cellular. Shown in photo during the contract signing are Jay-R with (from left) his manager Arnold Vegafria, Sun's AVP for prepaid marketing Joan Dueñas and marketing manager Ejay Grey.

JS UNITRADE MERCHANDISE, UNION SIGN CBA

JS Unitrade Merchandise Inc and the Independent Union of JS Unitrade Employees recently signed their CBA to promote and foster a cordial and harmonious relationship between the management and the union members. Held at the JS Unitrade Merchandise Inc Office at Raffles Corporate Center in Ortigas, the agreement was signed by Samuel Po, President; Luisito Morales, HR manager; and their legal counsel lawyer Gilbert Santos of Fortun Narvasa Salazar law firm representing management of JS Unitrade Merchandise Inc and Woodie Panganiban, president of Independent Union of JS Unitrade, together with his respective union officers and their legal counsel lawyer Meynard Garcia.

NISSAN-RENAULT CHIEF, UMC EVP MEET WITH PGMA

Nissan-Renault chief Carlos Ghosn and UMC EVP Elizabeth Lee met with PGMA on the government's Auto Market Expansion Program producing low cost vehicles targeting SMEs showing Nissan's interest in the program. The meeting took place against the backdrop of the World Economic Forum held in Singapore.

FBRDC RECEIVES DEVELOPER AWARD

Mannuel C. Crisostomo, president, Firm Builders Realty Development Corporation (FBRDC) receives the developer award from Vice President and HUDCC Chair 'Kabayan' Noli De Castro and HLRB Commissioner and CEO Romulo Q. Fabul. Also in the picture are HLRB Commissioner Jesus Y. Pang, and HLRB Regional Officer Evangeline B. Agan.

HONDA UNVEILS THE NEW XRM 125

Honda launches its clean motorcycle, the New XRM 125. Shown (from left): Rodney Pascua of Honda spare parts, Bart Ofiana, Asatsu Advertising managing director, Lulu Montiflor, public relations manager, Peter Gatchalian, events and public relations, Victor Ferrer, power products and Reynan Buccat, events staff at the Honda 3s shop Booth Concept exhibit, held from May 26-31, activity center, Festival Mall, Alabang.

MERCK INC TEAMS UP WITH PNRC

As a follow-up to the successful 'Gisingin ang Dugo' call centers program, Merck Inc, maker of the iron supplement Sangobion capsule, once again teams up with the Philippine National Red Cross (PNRC) for another leg of its anemia awareness campaign. The year-long partnership program, which includes bloodletting activities, aims to further educate the public on anemia, as well as how to prevent it. In photo are (from left) Dr. Michael Marquez, Dr. Monina Nalupta, and Ms. Rosa Rosal of PNRC, Viktor Oliveros, Brand Manager for Sangobion, Gwen Pang of PNRC, and Joven Jonas of Merck Inc.

FREEGO UNVEILS LATEST COLLECTION

Freego recently unveiled its latest collection of metallic-inspired jeans in the show 'Art Comes to Life', a naked art fashion show held in SM Mall of Asia last June 23. This fashion event launched Anne Curtis as the new face of Freego Jeans. She is joined by some of the top models in the industry in showcasing the Vintage Gold, Rustic Vintage and Platinum Jeans collection of Freego. Their bodies became human canvasses and were transformed into living works of art by Alfred Galvez and his team of young and talented artists. Adding further spice and edge to the show were the electric performances of Shamrock together with contemporary folk-rock band Mirahel. This event was also presented by SM Mall of Asia and GSM Blue.

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SCIENCE/HEALTH

Editor Cesar D. Mangawang

Text us your feedback: Inquirer hea name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Keeping people out of hospitals

Text and photos by Tessa R. Salazar

First of three parts

TO KEEP PEOPLE OUT of hospitals is the primary goal of a 75-year-old organic plant-based food supplements company in the United States.

Nutrilite espouses optimal health as a combination of good nutrition, good exercise, a sound mind for optimistic outlook and proper rest. Nutrilite Health Institute president Sam Rehnborg, a biochemist, also reiterated that consumers have a choice on all this.

In a recent interview with Philippine media in Buena Park, California, Rehnborg stressed that by making their own choices, individuals take charge of their own lives. "By the time people will have taken care of you (when you get sick), there's not much left of you. Bring that awareness of choice early on in people's lives. That's the challenge."

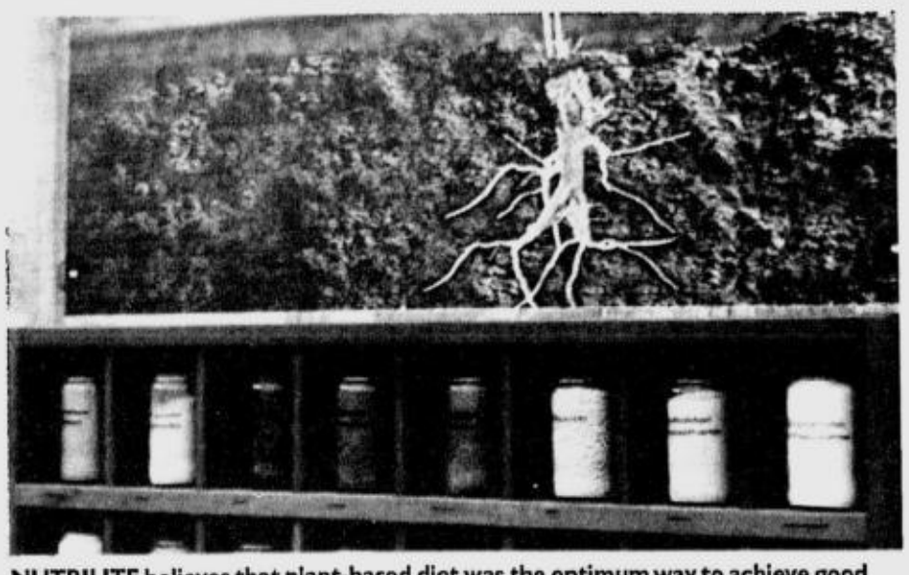
Health problems

Rhenborg also said the health problems around the world are caused by chronic diseases, which he estimated as taking up 90 percent of health care costs in the United States and in the Philippines.

"If you get people to embrace optimal health early on and take care of themselves, then cancer and heart disease would show much later (in life)."

Rehnborg lamented the cost of treating chronic illnesses. Billions of dollars are being spent on developing exotic cures and artificial organs.

The answer, Rhenborg said, is prevention. "Whether it's preventing aging, cancer or heart disease—prevention is where the future is, and there's a tidal wave of interest in this area today, bombarded with information coming in from around the world on the role of nutrition and fitness in preventing disease and the optimization of human health."



NUTRILITE believes that plant-based diet was the optimum way to achieve good nutrition, and preserving important plant nutrients using its unique concentration is the way to go.

Nutrigenomics

Food supplement giant Nutrilite keeps 100 scientists researching on and developing over 200 products, and maintains several organic farms in different parts of the world. Rhenborg revealed that the company has now ventured into nutrigenomics, a study of how nutrition affects individuals at the genetic level.

Dietary problems do exist among people in all nations, Rhenborg admitted. "But genetics has a big role to play in all these. If we can understand genetics better, we can design products better to help people prevent these problems, he said.

Of smart, male Norwegian broods

DISCOVER

Massie Santos Ballon

THE INTRODUCTION FOR THIS STORY was supposed to have been fairly dramatic: "Researchers find proof that being the eldest also means being the smartest," or something similar. Certainly the study behind this, which appeared in the June 22 issue of Science, has been widely discussed and contested. Unsurprisingly, younger siblings have protested the findings, older siblings have agreed wholeheartedly, and parents are divided.

In case you don't know what all the fuss is about, recent studies indicate that the eldest male Norwegian child is smarter than his younger male siblings. The news comes by way of Petter Kristensen from the University of Oslo and Tor Bjerkedal from the Norwegian Armed Forces Medical Services, who co-authored the papers which recently appeared in the journals Intelligence and Science. Their findings are based on family data and IQ test results collected by the military on over 200,000 conscripted males—no data from female siblings were included—who were born between 1967 and 1998.

Comparing IQ scores

Pettersen and Bjerkedal started by comparing the IQ scores of male siblings within a family. They then compared the results of all the males of the same birth order. For example, they averaged the IQ scores of all the firstborn males and compared it with the average IQ score of the second-born males, the average IQ score of the third-born males, and so on.

Pettersen and Bjerkedal found that the higher the males were in the family order—either by birth or socially because their older siblings had died—the higher their average IQ scores. Interestingly, as shown in the Science study, the differences between the average IQ scores were only a couple of points: the firstborn males had an average score of 103.2 against 101.2 for males born second. The second-born males who were raised as the eldest had an average IQ score closer to the firstborns (102.9).

Are two points on an IQ test really enough to fight over? Would non-Norwegian siblings have IQ scores with greater differences? These questions are just some of the reasons the Science paper has generated so much attention. For decades, researchers have pondered the relationship between birth order and intelligence. Several theories have been proposed, ranging from maternal antibodies that affect the development of the fetal brain, to the influence of the family environment. Pettersen and Bjerkedal's results lend credence to the latter idea; that the eldest children benefit from spending the most time with their parents.

'The achievers'

In an editorial accompanying the Science paper, Frank Sulloway, a psychologist at the University of California at Berkeley, noted that previous studies have shown that firstborns are regarded as "the achievers" not only by themselves, but by their parents and siblings. While such perceptions aren't necessarily proof of any real differences between siblings in terms of personality or ability, he added, "such competitive role differentiations and shared beliefs may also help explain why elder siblings, by early adulthood, have higher IQs than their younger siblings."

If older siblings are expected to be the achievers, is it possible that the younger ones might underperform, however unconsciously, on IQ tests to maintain this notion? When asked, Sulloway said no. "No sibling in a Darwinian world allows another sibling to have a free lunch in sibling competition," he replied via e-mail. "If younger siblings have lower IQs, this is probably not to help the elder sibling occupy a family role but rather because they are putting time and effort into something else, such as sports or hobbies."

Regardless of what Torkensen and Bjerkedal may bring to the debate over birth order and intelligence, Sulloway's answer makes one thing clear: Norwegian or not, and gender aside, sibling rivalry will always flourish.

* * *

E-mail the author at massie@massie.com.

Docs deserve good retirement

By Rafael R. Castillo, MD

MEDICAL FILES

PRACTISING DOCTORS PUT IN MORE hours in their work than those who have an 8 to 5 job. And talk about irregular hours, it comes with the medical profession, with doctors having to wake up in the middle of the night to attend to an emergency, or interrupt one's dinner with the family to answer an urgent call from the emergency room.

Many doctors I know especially those who have small hospitals in the provinces work 24/7 and hardly take any vacation. It's not so much that they're in a no-work, no-pay or no-work, no-business predicament, but more because of their dedication to their patients.

Totally unprepared

It may be generally true that doctors make good money in exchange for all the hard and stressful work they do. They have no problems with finances while they're still strong and able, but frequently, we have doctors caught totally unprepared for an emergency, and sometimes face their retirement with uncertainty whether or not their modest savings can still sustain them and maintain inflation-adjusted living standards after their retirement.

What's even more unfortunate is when doctors fall victims to investment scams because of their poor knowledge in managing their finances and investments. Instead of increasing their hard-earned savings, they see their total net worth gradually depleted as they age.

"This is something which we didn't learn in medical school or during training," says Dr. Nelson Abelardo, immediate past president of the Philippine Society of Hypertension. "Many doctors realize too late that they should have prepared for their retirement by making sure they had enough savings and investments to make them financially independent up to their twilight years."

How to retire in style

The PSH, in collaboration with Therapharma Inc., is organizing another whole-day seminar workshop for doctors and other healthcare professionals titled Evidence-based "Secrets" to Financial Abundance (... and how to retire in style). This will be held at the Crowne Plaza on July 21.

Noted professors on financial management from the Asian Institute of Management have been invited to share with the participating doctors practical pointers on the following topics: Establishing Your Financial Goals, Growing your Net Worth, Identifying Financial Opportunities, The Power of Compound Interest, Preparing for Retirement: Computing the Nuts and Bolts, The Red Flags: Managing your Debt, Identifying Scams, etc, and The ADB-VEST Formula for Financial Abundance.

Among the distinguished AIM professors who will compose the faculty are Noel Leyco, Rafael Azanza, Alejandro Ferreria and Jay Bernardo.

Practical pointers

According to the organizers, this one-day course can help its doctor-participants proactively draft a strategic organizational plan designed to progressively grow their net worth way beyond what they thought was possible. It will offer tried-and-tested and practical pointers and draw on a frequently untapped source of success to achieve not only financial freedom but abundance that can pave the way to a wonderful retirement. Many of these principles can also be applied to achieve other essential goals in life including good health, happiness, wonderful relationships, peace of mind and real success.

This seminar-workshop is one of the joint service activities of the PSH and Therapharma. The PSH and Therapharma were encouraged by the good feedback from the participants of previous seminars. This is already the third workshop which equips doctors with the basics on finance, entrepreneurship and investment opportunities to guide the doctors on how to grow their assets on the side.

Since they're not totally dependent on their income as physicians, they can spare more time offering their services for free to charity patients, and also take a break from work and relax in their favorite resort. Stress has taken a toll on the health of many busy doctors.

Doctors and other healthcare professionals who are interested to attend may call the PSH secretariat at 687-2841, 687-7073, 631-7970 or 0917-6255810.

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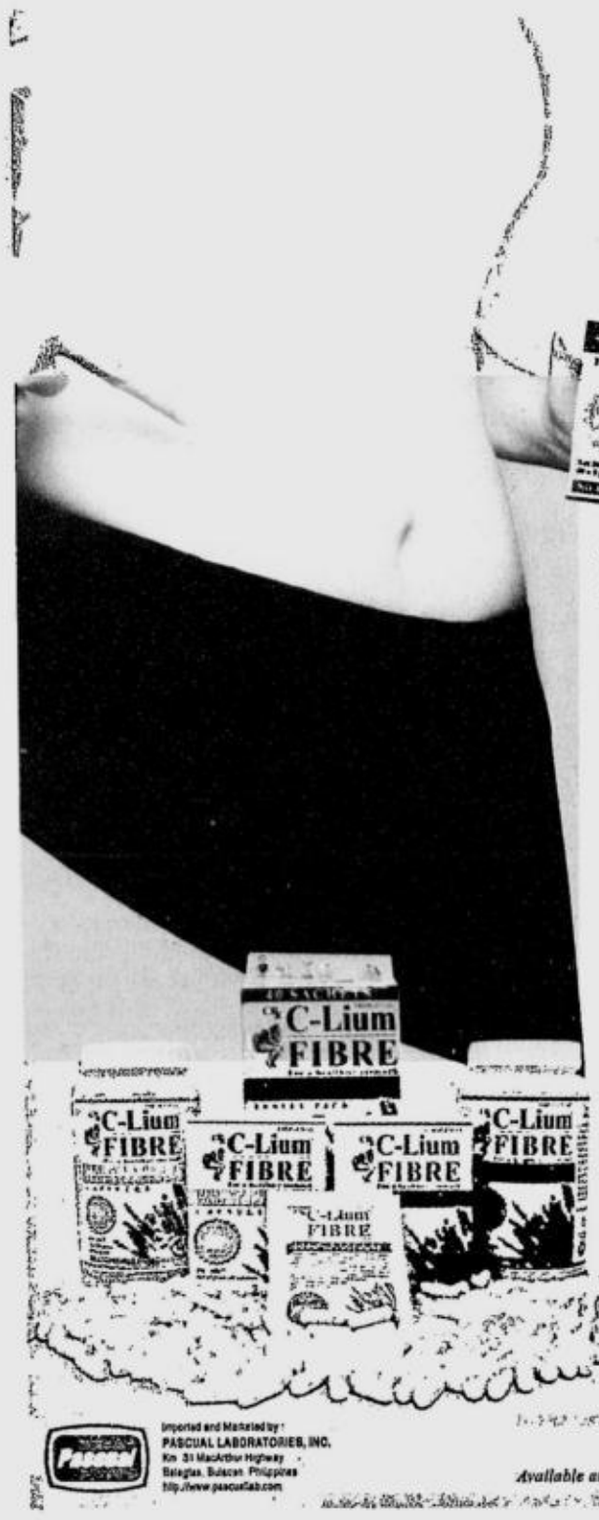

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Luly Cruz, National Scientist

EUREKA!

Queena N. Lee-Chua

JULY IS NATIONAL SCIENCE AND Technology Month. Let us pay homage to people who have done much for our country, but who unfortunately, are still not as well-known as movie stars or basketball players. These are our National Scientists, and Lourdes "Luly" Jansuy Cruz, PhD, is the most recent scientist to be accorded this honor.

Last year, Luly, at 64, was conferred the rank and title of National Scientist, the highest honor given to a man or woman of science in the Philippines.

Background

Luly finished BS Chemistry at the University of the Philippines in Diliman in 1962, and her MS and PhD in Biochemistry at the University of Iowa, United States, in 1966 and 1968, respectively. She served as research aide in 1962 at the International Rice Research Institute, where she returned after earning her doctorate. She taught as assistant professor at the UP Department of Biochemistry in 1970 and became full professor in 1977.

From 1980 to 1986, Luly served as chair of UP Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology. For over 20 years, she also spent one to six months every year as research associate and as research professor in the University of Utah. She is now based at the UP Marine Science Institute.

Toxins from cone snails

I had the pleasure of interviewing Luly in depth for my book "Ten Outstanding Filipino Scientists" a few years back. I remember watching in fascination as she handled deadly cone snails with finesse and nonchalantly explained how their toxins could be used to make useful substances.

Luly established the Rural Livelihood Incubator in 2001 with the help of volunteers and private donors. This aimed to generate employment opportunities and establish a sustainable means of livelihood to counter poverty and socio-political instability in rural areas.

Luly has produced over 120 scientific publications. In 1981, she was one of the recipients of Outstanding Young Scientist award from National Academy of Science and Technology, and she was elected to the Academy in 1986.

NAST lists only 32 National Scientists so far, 11 of them still actively participating in its activities and events of national importance. They are (with year of conferment) Fe Del Mundo (1980), Clara Y. Lim-Sylianco (1994), Dolores A. Ramirez (1998), Jose R. Velasco (1998), Gelia T. Castillo (1999), Bienvenido O. Juliano (2000), Benito S. Vergara (2001), Clare R. Baltazar (2001), Onofre D. Corpuz (2004), Ricardo M. Lantican (2005), and Lourdes J. Cruz (2006).

I thank Aristotle Carandang of NAST for many details about Dr. Cruz's work. "Ten Outstanding Filipino Scientists" is available in most bookstores. Or call Anvil Publishing at 637-8840 or e-mail at gwenn.galvez@anvilpublishing.com to order a copy.

* * *

Queena N. Lee-Chua, PhD, is professor of math and psychology at the Ateneo de Manila University. Contact her at blessbook@yahoo.com.

Award-winning developer focuses more on mass housing

By Charles E. Buban

PROVIDING AFFORDable housing to less affluent sector of the society has always been a top priority of the government.

But this is becoming an almost impossible task considering that the country's backlog now stands at 1.4 million housing units, according to a recent Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council estimate.

In order to at least lessen this figure, the government in recent years has been pushing the private sector to invest more in mass housing project, which has a multiplier effect of 16.6.

"This would mean that for every peso invested in this type of housing project, P16.60 worth of investments in related industries sectors are generated," explained Manuel Crisostomo, president of Firm Builders Realty Development Corp., a leading developer of mass housing projects in the countryside.

Committed investment

FBRDC has been one of the developers that contributed to the P12.65 billion worth of committed investments from January to April this year as reported recently by the Department of Trade and Industry.

According to the department, such investment figure is already twice the figure (P6.34 billion) generated last year in the same period.

"Our company has been actively supporting regional dispersal and more balanced urban-rural development through careful selection of project locations. This is why most of our projects are located in the countryside," Crisostomo explained.

He reported that from 1990 to 2007, the FBRDC has developed almost 300 hectares of land into 30 completed housing projects which translates to some 12,000 quality yet affordable housing units.

Conscientiously locate

"We conscientiously locate our developments in areas where there are concentration of higher housing demand in response to the government's call to address the country's burgeoning housing needs," said Robert Herman, FBRDC senior vice president.

In fact, FBRDC was recently a recipient of five major awards given by the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board.

"It was indeed a great honor for us to receive these awards. We are happy that the government is recognizing our efforts," Herman said.

The HLURB, which is responsible for coming up with a comprehensive land use and physical plan for the country and cities, has awarded FBRDC as the leading developer in economic housing (house and lot package project) in Region 2 or the Cagayan Valley in northern Luzon), Region 6 or the Western Visayas, and Region 10 or Northern Mindanao.

The company was also awarded as leading developer in socialized housing (house and lot package project in Region 6 as well as in Region 10).

Economic housing, otherwise known as low-cost housing, refers to units with prices ranging from P500,000 to P1.5 million while socialized housing are those units with price tag of up to P300,000.

FBRDC believes that buyers of economic and socialized housing also deserve beautifully laid-out community as well as functional amenities.

Recognizing private sector

HLURB Commissioner Romulo Fabul explained during the awarding ceremony that the award is government's way of recognizing its private sector partners in addressing the country's housing needs, especially in the economic and socialized housing sector.

Crisostomo said these awards will further inspire FBRDC to continue developing housing projects that are responsive to the needs of the Filipino homebuyers.

In fact, the company is currently developing low-cost and economic housing projects in Dumaguete City (Estanzia South Subdivision), Bacolod City (Glendale Subdivision) and Cagayan de Oro (Silver Creek Subdivision), which have a total of 2,000 housing units.

FBRDC president Crisostomo explained that by employing modern construction technology and building materials, the company is able to build quality yet affordable housing units.

Designing with a partner

DESIGN DIMENSIONS

Isabel Berenguer Asuncion

WORKING ON A COUPLE'S DREAM HOME represents many challenges to a designer. Unlike corporate or commercial projects, most residential projects are not schedule-driven. Consequently, timelines often extend way past targeted deadlines. Moreover, the assortment of functions that have to be addressed within the four walls of a home are true tests of creative thinking.

And as if these were not enough, we also have to deal with the duality of each problem: the male force and female force—husbands and wives coming together, or falling apart, in the pursuit of their design preferences or ideals. We have often been witnesses to discussions between couples that often start as light banter, turn into sour mockery and later, exasperation as frustrations come to the fore.

Duality in our perspectives

As an architect cum designer married to and working in a professional partnership with another architect cum designer, I have had to likewise deal with the duality in our perspectives. I too have had my fair share of banter, annoyance and walk-outs.

MY better half in an unguarded moment: the visual artist cum architect among his works of art

My husband and business partner, Ding, was two years ahead in university. We were both in architecture school and while I was the annoyingly active student, he was of the quiet anonymous sort. I understood his silence when I got to know him better. His language was not verbal, it was visual. Ding is an extremely talented and prolific visual artist—if you'll take my word for it. He has developed most of his art in creative silence, in quiet hours of youth, spent sketching or swinging brushstrokes to create works of art that many have described as ingenious.

Today, Ding is more verbally expressive, and because of that, our discussions on matters of design have graduated to another level. Fortunately for our clients, our sparring does not end in collision but is often settled through collaboration and mutual respect for each other's perspective.

Because our professional lives developed independently of the other, we now find ourselves better appreciating each other's talents and experiences.

Good working relationship

I must admit though that it took time for our partnership to fully develop. Many couples building family homes often don't have the luxury of time to nurture a good working relationship and fall into the rut of constant disagreement.

While the wife wants to invest in a good refrigerator, her husband would rather put the money into the latest audio-video system. While the man agonizes over a feeling that his house's architecture is not in-your-face awesome enough, the wife anguishes over security and day-to-day comfort. And if that isn't difficult enough, husband and wife exhibit distinct preferences on esthetics—styling, color and forms—that cannot be judged as either right or wrong, only different.

So that one's dream home does not become an arena for husband-and-wife conflict, I often advise couples to first lay out all practical needs and rank these over and above preferences, thereby creating a common foundation for action. Next, I encourage them to use a professional who can offer them objective recommendations and decisions on matters of design.

Rule No. 3 would probably be to reevaluate their partnership. If one has unfortunately tied up with someone of opposing tastes, it may be time to make a revolutionary change in one's personal preferences. The other option would be—to simply change one's partner.

'21st Century Cities'

LIVING ARCHITECTURE

Marcos de Guzman Jr.

WHAT COMES TO MIND WHEN YOU hear the words "Digital," "Creativity," "Intelligence" and "Arts"? You would probably think about high-tech robots from Japan or state-of-the-art computer games. Have you ever thought about them as important components in emerging cities?

Just last month, the "21st Century Cities" conference was held in Dublin, Ireland, wherein our country was represented by the sole Eisenhower Fellow from the Philippines, architect Lea Ng of Ayala Land Inc. Below, she shares her insights on the hottest development now sweeping the high-tech cities of Europe, United States and Asia. These are issues we will find at the top of the wish lists of local city planners and property developers in the very near future.

Digital trends in global cities

The conference in Dublin focused on current and future trends in cities around the world in the 21st century. Topics on city trends ranged from the impact of technology, the importance of the "creative class," challenges facing cities like Dublin, and the role of culture and arts to urban renewal. Dublin was an appropriate conference venue since the country experienced rapid economic growth in the past decade or so.

Known as the "Celtic Tiger," Ireland is now the world's leading exporter of computer software, and is Europe's fastest growing economy. Its shift in economic focus elevated Ireland's agricultural and industrial economy to an information technology platform, attracting key IT players from overseas to do business on their shores.

While the concept of high-tech cities has been around for some time and has propelled places such as Bangalore, Silicon Valley, and Dubai to the top of the IT map, digital cities focus on how technology is utilized in the day-to-day operations of the metropolis.

One of the emerging trends discussed by Martin Curley, the director of IT Innovation of Intel, was the rise of wireless cities in Europe, United States and Asia, citing different applications of how technology has advanced areas of city governance and administration in terms of crime prevention, education and the delivery of services. As an example, he mentioned the Westminster's West End in England, where Soho, the hub of night life and entertainment in London, is located.

With the influx of tourists, migrants and workers, Westminster's incidence of crime also increased. So in 2002, the city council of Westminster piloted the Digital City, a project which would employ WiFi technology to make it easier to do business with the council, renew the infrastructure, deliver sustained improvements in education, and reduce incidence of crime.

For instance, to curb crime, Westminster has one of the most sophisticated CCTV (closed circuit television) camera systems, installed on street lamps and façades of buildings along highly susceptible areas. Doing away with conventional hard-wired CCTV systems which take several months to install, Westminster adopted wireless CCTV systems using its metropolitan-wide wireless network allowing the deployment, installation, relocation, or expansion of its monitoring system within 24 hours. The wireless system offers unprecedented flexibility and responsiveness.

Technology for the people

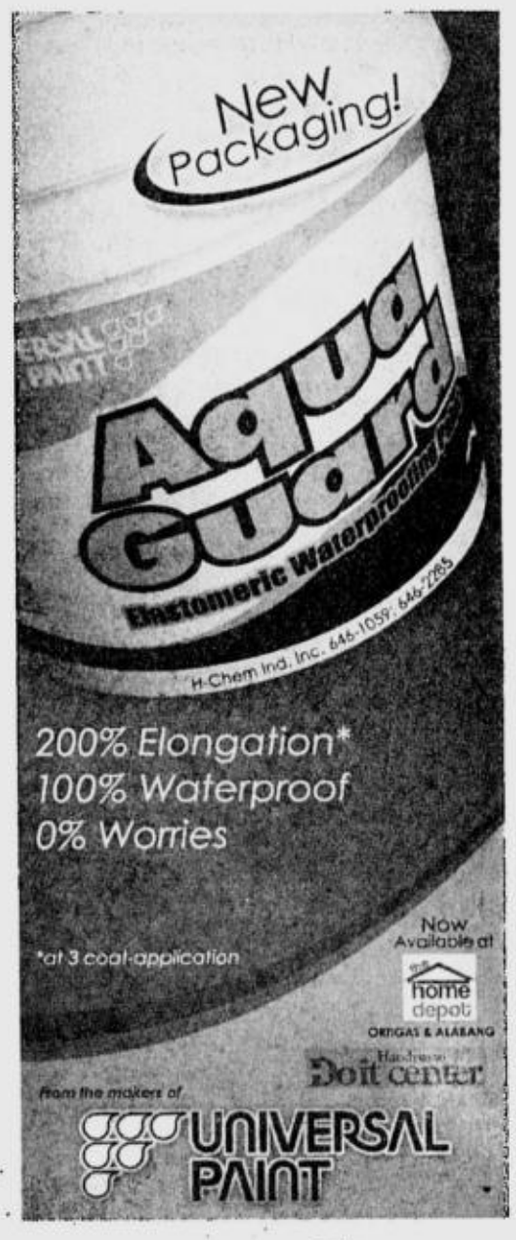
While the convenience offered by wireless networks is now evident to almost every laptop and smart phone user, even in developing cities such as Metro Manila, metropolitan-wide applications of wireless technology for purposes of public governance and administration appear to be the next steps in the technological evolution of cities.

Although the rise of digital cities and the broadening applications of technology undoubtedly provide unparalleled convenience for users, they likewise raise concerns regarding sustainability. The close association of technological advancement with consumerism and consumption seems to be at odds with the growing interest in environmental preservation, social equity and economic viability (the triple bottom line of sustainable development).

Certainly, there is a need to bring state-of-the-art digital wireless technology in a developing society down to the level of a population that may not even have ready access to personal computers. We can probably start off with wireless communications systems that are ubiquitous in the Philippines-such as the cell phone networks. While it may still take years for Wi-Fi digital cities in its truest form to be broadly adopted in Philippine cities, perhaps available systems can replicate the same convenience, allowing wireless communications to become not just tools of personal connectivity and productivity but also tools for delivering public services.

A key insight gained from the "21st Century Cities" conference is not about the availability or the type of technology itself, but the level of inventiveness in how such technology is used to deliver an enhanced urban environment. While we may be less advanced in technology, inventiveness is something that Filipinos have in abundance. One only needs to recall how Filipinos have been able to use instant messaging as a mainstream form of communication long before it became common in first world countries.

Digital mobile phones became the standard mode of domestic telecommunication, long before conventional telephone landlines reached our remote provinces. The availability of technology, together with necessity and Filipino adaptability, has allowed us to bypass the conventional evolutionary route. Thus, it may be possible that in the not so distant future, our own version of a digital city, using adapted systems of readily available, affordable, sustainable wireless networks, will serve the increasingly urban mass population of the Philippines beyond personal communication. All it takes is a bit of inspired thinking.



Pampanga an 'it' place . . .

From page B8

have more than 75 foreign and local companies doing business.

2 projects

And now—make way, everyone—RP property icon Ayala Land Inc. has thrown its hat into the fray. Just 10 minutes from Clark is bustling Angeles City, and this is where ALI has masterplanned a P750-million residential project (35 hectares) and a P1.8-billion mall development project (9 hectares).

To be developed by ALI's sister-company Community Innovations Inc., Marquee Place will also be accessible from Metro Manila via the North Luzon Expressway using the Angeles Exit.

The Q Shopping will be a "personalized mall" for that particular region as Ayala plans to put in many local and international fashion brands, popular labels, first-rate dining and family entertainment.

Dan Abando, CII president, revealed that the selling price of their residential lots per square meter will range from P8,000 to P11,000. Lot cut sizes will range from 220 to 500 sq m.

Businesswoman Racky Torres-Manalastas purchased a 329-sq-m corner lot at the park area facing southeast. She described it as a good community concept, especially the dumbbell park idea where there are more prime lots.

Tech specs

The Marquee Place's grand entrance will have a towering eight-meter guardhouse of contemporary architecture, a 20-meter-wide tree-lined roadway with "stampcrete" pavement highlights and an articulated perimeter fence with landscaping.

It will have what it calls a 1.2-hectare Social Zone composed of a 640-sq-m clubhouse, a 25-meter lap pool and kiddie pool, open spaces and meandering walkways and a jogging trail. The entire establishment will have Wi-fi connectivity.

It will also include a 6,500 sq-m Sports Pod that includes covered courts for basketball and badminton, an open field that doubles as a junior soccer field and a view deck to enjoy the "expansive view" of the Angeles horizon.

2 linear parks

There will be two linear parks that will connect the Social Zone and the Sports Pod. This will have approximate area of 5,000 sq m each

The North Central Park features a relaxing ambiance that has water element, gazebos, benches for individual leisure time-out, landscaped open space for intimate group gathering and Wi-fi access connectivity

The South Central Park features kiddie amenities specially designed for kids contained in a landscaped tree-lined perimeter ensuring a clean, green and safe environment.

It will have cluster developments which will have private pocket communities that will promote neighborhood environment.

Residential lots have sizes ranging from 220 to 500 sq m and modal size of 220 sq m.

The house and lot will have western contemporary, options for façade finish, regular western contemporary, upgraded western contemporary (WOW House).

There will be an open layout, five different floor plans: 148, 188, 208, 228 and 248.

Facilities and utilities include property management, 24-hour security, 24-hour water supply, overhead water tanks, telephone, sewage treatment plant

The turnover of Phase 1A and 1B is scheduled in March 2009, and Phase 2A is scheduled for turnover in May 2009.

Editor Cesar D. Mangawang

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Pampanga a new haven for developers

By Tessa R. Salazar

KAPAMPANGANS NEver had it so good insofar as the real estate sector is concerned. This time, the business boom hasn't required any help from a US military base.

Factors that helped attract developers to Pampanga are the province's proximity to Manila, lots of English-speaking residents (who view foreigners as just part of the daily life), major universities and flourishing business process outsourcing (BPO) companies.

One of the biggest BPO firms to have made Pampanga a major base is tech hardware manufacturer Texas Instruments. Just two months ago, the world's biggest maker of mobile phone chips landed in the front pages when it chose to build its 77,000-square-meter, $1-billion semiconductor facility on Clark Freeport Zone,—choosing that over China and Thailand.

Another major business establishment is the 44-hectare Philexcel Business Park Inc., a pioneer locator in Clark Freeport Zone that is expected to

PAMPANGA/ B7

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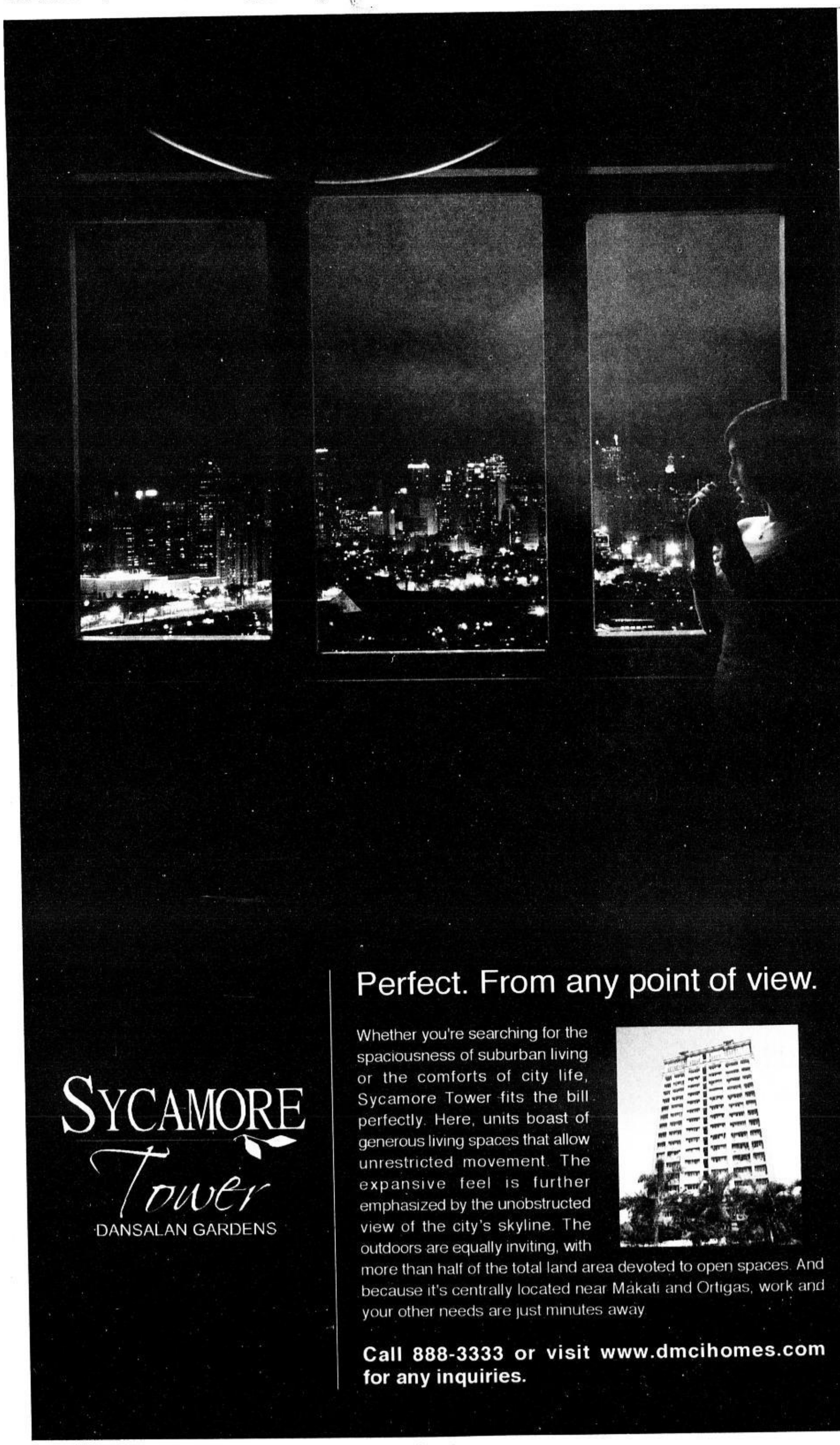

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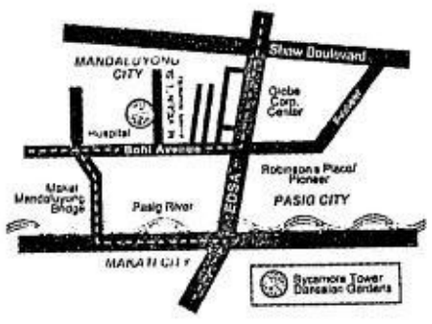
Feel free to move about
Living at Sycamore Tower lets you experience true freedom. Not only in the boundless open spaces and the generously sizable units, but in the liberating feel of the city's skyline panorama. Enjoy the soothing views of the sunset over the Makati skyline or be mesmerized by the sparkle of the city lights at night.

Move freely within the city
Situated in the corner of Boni Ave. and M. Vicente in Mandaluyong, Sycamore Tower Dansalan Gardens is strategically located between Makati and Mandaluyong, so you can move freely to and from the city. Here, work and all your other needs are just minutes away.



Be free from worries
Staying within the property is pleasurable as well thanks to the resort-like amenities that the whole family can enjoy. Life here is worry-free as a team of trained professionals take care of the daily maintenance of the facilities. In addition, safety and privacy is never an issue with 24-hour monitoring and top-of-the-line security systems.

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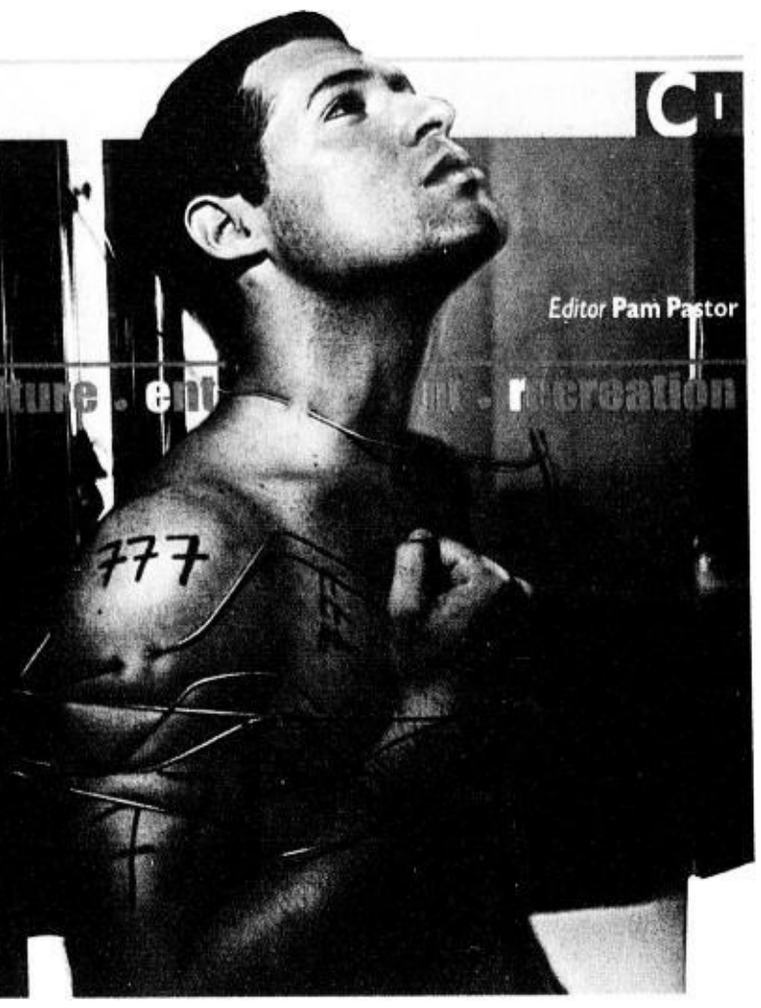
Editor Pam Pastor



Charmed

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Shop, look and listen
Hong Kong style page E1

Get to know
Harry's chicks page D1

The plot thickens for Philippine
literature page E4

Two timer

NO CURFEW CONTINUES TO BREAK new ground by enlisting Fil-British football sensations, James and Philip Younghusband, as the 2007 brand ambassadors for its premium line of watches.

These good-looking brothers are probably most famous for their involvement with the English Premiere League champions Chelsea FC, the world's most expensively assembled football league. The Younghusband brothers grew up loving the beautiful game and are actually excellent at it that they will headline the Philippine Men's Under-23 National Football Team at the 2007 Southeast Asian Games scheduled in Thailand later in the year.

Apart from kicking their way to the top in football with their talent on the pitch, there is another thing the brother's have in common—they are total heart throbs with Hollywood looks.

James, at 20, is tall, dark and handsome. Inspired by his cool, classic looks and mysterious personality, No Curfew chose him as the brand ambassador for its luxury line of watches composing of Hugo Boss, Mido, Issey Miyake, Time Force and Andy Warhol.

On the other hand, the young, colorful and hot Philip "Ledge" Younghusband will represent Tissot, Appetime, Storm London, Lego and Tommy Hilfiger. This 19-year-old looker is a risk-taker who is willing to experiment with different looks and designs to match his vibrant personality. This hyper, witty and sociable lad is after all Chelsea Reserve's most valuable striker who was also recently flown to Los Angeles by L.A. Galaxy to see if he's got what it takes to play alongside David Beckham on the first team.

Admittedly a huge fan of Tissot, Phil wore his favorite yellow T-Touch Series during his various media appearances and photo shoots.

Inspired by No Curfew's fearless concept, both boys are successfully making their original mark in the international football scene. Thanks to its decision in choosing the Younghusband Brothers, No Curfew will definitely continue to be a cut above the rest.

No Curfew watch stores are located at the 5th Level of the Shangri-La Plaza Mall, Farmer's Plaza in Araneta Center, Market! Market! at the Fort, Mall of Asia, Trinoma, Ayala Cebu, Bacolod, Batangas, SM San Lazaro, SM City Marilao, SM City Pampanga, SM City Iloilo, SM City Cagayan de Oro, and SM City Davao. It has kiosks at the department stores of SM Makati and North Edsa, Limketkai Mall in Cagayan de Oro City, Eastwood Cybermall and at the Podium.

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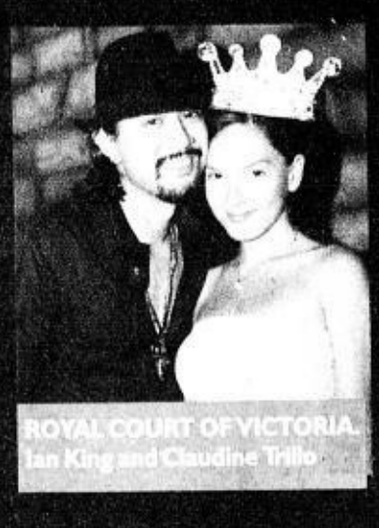
Hail to the onl

KINGS OF THE COURT. Fernando Arracama, Tim Yap, Erik Cua and Jon Herrera

FACE OFF. Tessa Dragon and Xeng Zulueta


ROYAL COURT OF VICTORIA. Ian King and Claudine Trillo

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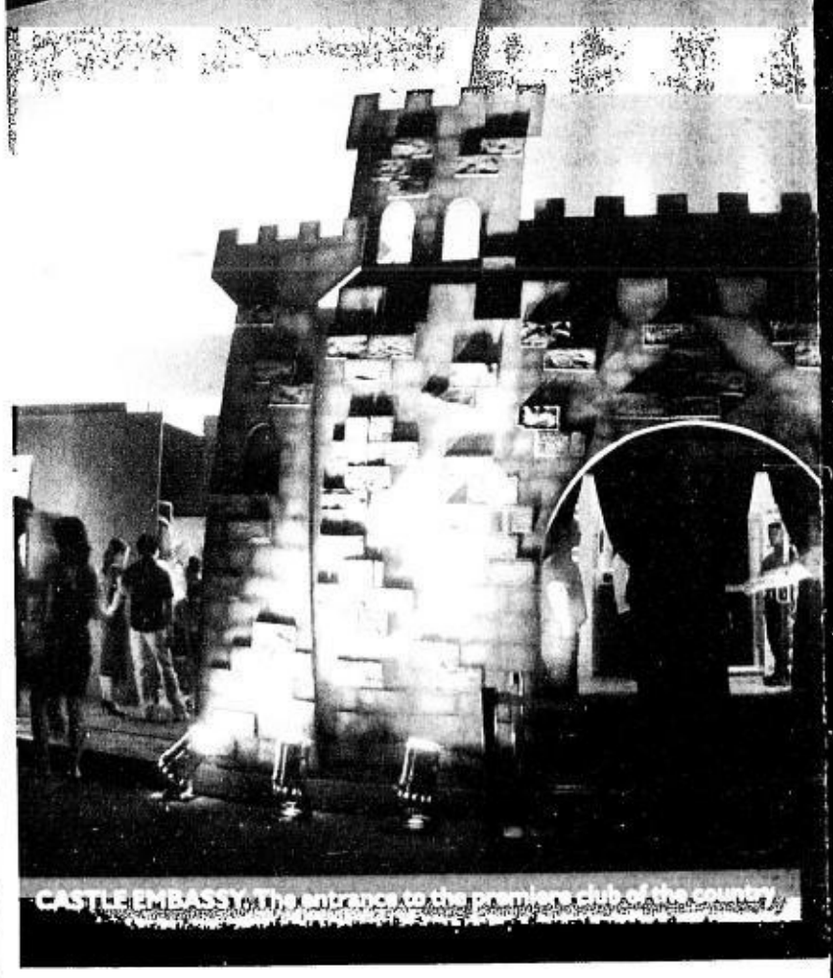

CASTLE EMBASSY. The entrance to the premiere club of the country

AZZLING DAMES. Michelle Pamintuan, Micho Suarez, May Munoz and Kat Cruz

ROYAL RUFFLES. Charmaine Palermo and Divine Lee

BLACK AND WHITE. Denise Laurel and Mich Dulce

BLING QUEEN Jenni Epperson

SWEETY SPICY Joyce Jimenez

RED RIBBON Kate Torralba

PARTY PRINCESSES. Stacy Rodriguez and Helena Belmonte

Kat Arambulo and David Nugent

y one

The royal court of Embassy celebrated it's 2nd year anniversary with Royal style!

Photos by Daniel Tan and Willy Saw

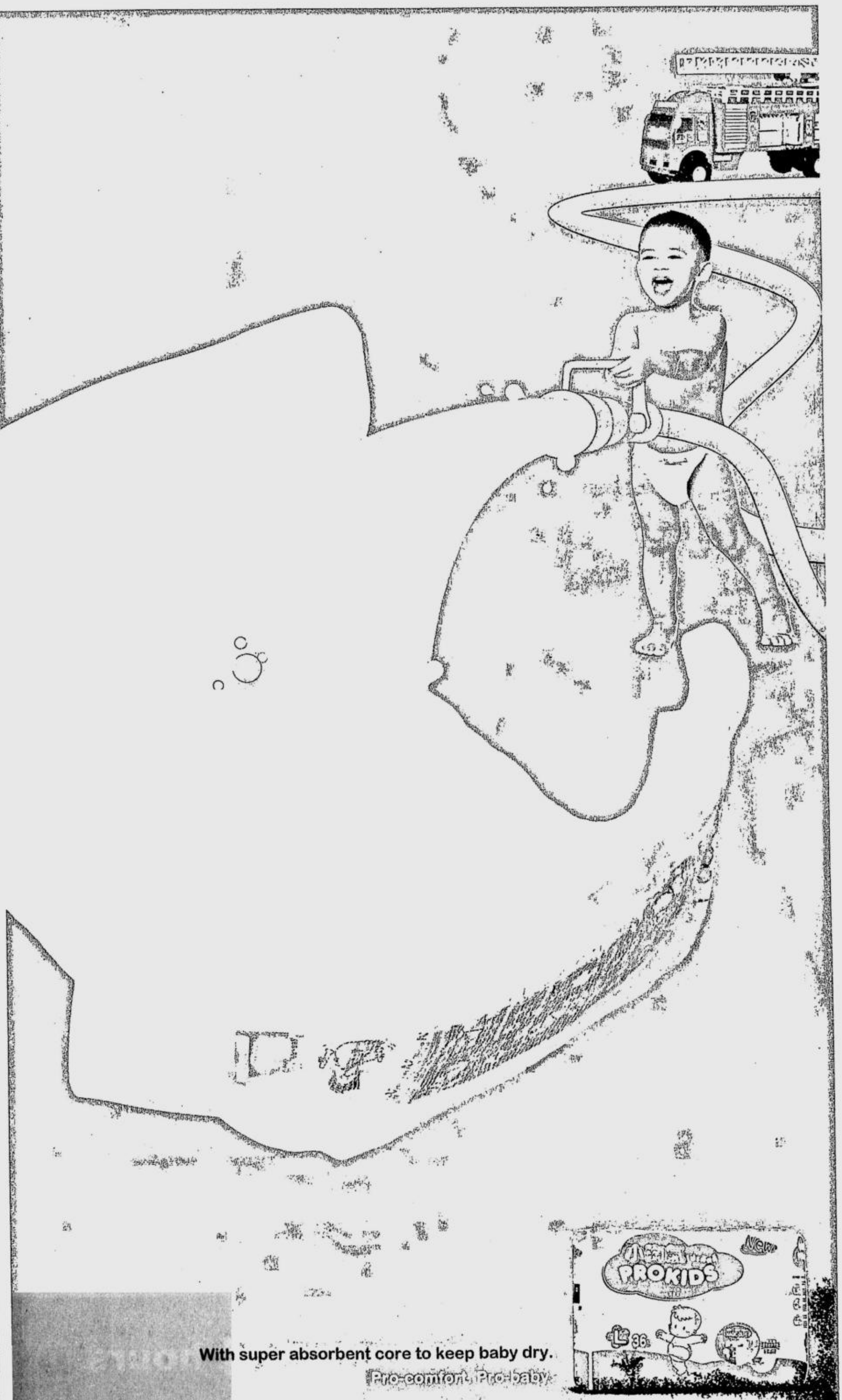
IN A LAND NOT SO FAR away, the royal kingdom of Embassy celebrated its second (make that almost third) year of endless happy endings. Royalty from all over the land walked the long, red carpet and gathered to join the festivities. People from nearby kingdoms Motorola, Dunhill, Smart, Mumm Champagne, Chivas Regal, Bacardi Rum, Skyy Vodka and Jose Cuervo were there to offer support as well. The celebration included a lot of singing, dancing and different kinds of merry-making. The four kings of kingdom Embassy—Fernando Arracama, Erik Cua, Jon Herrera and Tim Yap—partied the night away and gave away tons of presents to those who have served their kingdom well.

Embassy continues to grow as a kingdom—it will soon be expanding its grounds, bringing in the best of both local and international DJs and giving everyone a service that only royalties deserve.

MUSICIAN MADNESS. DJs Marc Martin, Ace, Chowy and Owen

DRIVEN DIRECTION. Robby Carmona

ROYAL JESTER. JM Rodriguez



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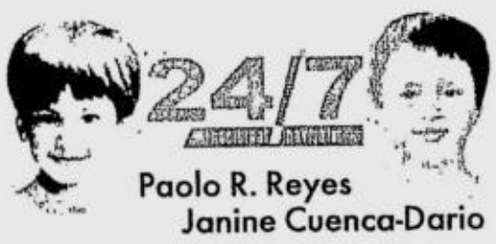


Paolo R. Reyes
Janine Cuenca-Dario

THE MIDTERM ELECTION SEASON may have left some of you still itching to exercise your voting powers. Since 2010 is still light years away, here's a fun and totally non-political alternative: vote for your nightlife and entertainment favorites in the Third Annual 24/7 Nocturnal Awards! Some of this year's categories include your favorite restaurant, bar or club, DJ, artist or live act, music event and more. The nomination period will end on Tuesday, July 31. Based on initial tallies, Chinese bistro Zong is currently leading in the Favorite Restaurant category, while DJ Ferry Corsten's Christmas day gig is locked in a tight race with other Music Event contenders. Visit mag24-7.com/awards.

The Police Chase

Tongues have been wagging about The Police. And we're not referring to our local law enforcement officers. The legendary '80s rock band-composed of British frontman Sting, guitarist Andy Summers and drummer Stewart Copeland—will celebrate their 30th anniversary with a bang: their first world tour since 1984!

If you want the iconic trio to stop by Manila in 2008, show your support by signing the "Bring the Police to Manila!" online petition at www.petitiononline.com/police08/petition.html. There are currently over 250 signatures, but they need at least 10,000. Spread the word.

Marissa Cooper Lives

Despite dying a dramatic death in the now-defunct TV series, "The O.C.," Marissa Cooper lives, apparently. A few months ago, People's Palace in Greenbelt 3 became the perfect stalking ground for popular actress Mischa Barton, who was caught dining in the Thai restaurant with a local retail tycoon. When asked by 24/7 if she was in town for a vacation or work, she answered with an enigmatic "no," and added that she was only in Manila for a day. Was she cooking up an endorsement deal with the retail giant? Intriguing.

Embassy Expansion?

The ambassadors of Embassy are currently busy firming up plans for their soon-to-open club. Word on the street is that it will rise at the former MTV office in The Fort complex. Yes, just a few baby steps away from their hugely successful (and sometimes controversial) establishment.

Wednesday Music Series

On July 11, 8 p.m., Sino Sikat? will be performing at Segafredo, Greenbelt 2, Ayala Center. This is part of a special series of music events sponsored by Winston. Sound is slated to perform on July 25. Local trip hop artists Drip and the talented Acoustic Jive were the featured performers in the first two concerts.

More Super! 24/7 events:

July 7, Saturday

DJ Colette: Live! with DJ Ali Nepomuceno at Warehouse 135; Charm of Spain concert at Instituto Cervantes; Wawi Navarroza's "Santa Frida" exhibit at Insituto Cervantes; DJs Karl Ty & Marie Garcia at Fiamma; Siesta w/ Soundsgood DJs at Embassy Cuisine; Rouge w/ DJ Red-I & Soul Flowa at M Café; Sexy Saturdays at Absinth; DJs Jon Herrera & Tolo Bote at Temple; Guarana at Café Havana Greenbelt; House Music at Mezze; NBA Madness at SM Mall of Asia (Music Hall); DJs Scratchmark & Bliss at Prince of Jaipur; Arriba at Café Havana Malate; Massive Saturdays at Bed; Family Affair at Merk's

July 8, Sunday

Third Virgin Labfest at CCP; NBA Madness at SM Mall of Asia (Music Hall); High School Musical at Meralco Theater; Mariel & Marissa de Leon-Lopa exhibit at Mezze; Amorsolo retrospective at UP Vargas Museum; Terry Berkowitz: Malaya Lolas at CCP Main Gallery; Nuevo Ritmo at Café Havana Greenbelt; Brunch Affair w/ Concertino at Azzurro Linden Suites; Red at White & The Blues at SM Mall of Asia (Piano Area); Jazz Sunday Brunch at M Café

July 9, Monday

Happy Mondays w/ Borgy Manotoc at Embassy Cuisine; BluRoom at Martinis Bar; Arriba at Café Havana Greenbelt; I Don't Like Mondays! w/ DJ RO at Gweilos Makati; Chemical Underground at Absinth; Retro Nights at Azzurro Linden Suites; Family Affair at Merk's

July 10, Tuesday

Deep Space feat. DJs Benjo Marquez & Jason Soong at Embassy Club; Cuisine Royale w/ DJ Manolet Dario at Embassy Cuisine; SPIT at Mag:net Café (High Street); Electronica Night at Fiamma; '80s & '90s Night w/ DJ Jeff at Temple

Jazz Night at Mezze; Sparkle w/ DJ Patch at Absinth; Guarana at Café Havana Greenbelt; Open Mic Night at Club O; Piano Nights at Azzurro Linden Suites; Aretha & Souled Out at Merk's

July 11, Wednesday

The Winston Concert Series feat. Sino Sikat? at Segafredo, Greenbelt 2 at 9 p.m.; House of Soul w/ DJs Benjo Marquez & Jason Soong at Fez; W Wednesdays w/ DJs Karl Ty & Cao Ocampo at Embassy Cuisine; Lush: Smooth Rn'B at Fiamma; Retro Classics at Warehouse 135; DJs Mars Miranda & Johnyverse at Embassy Club; Mishmash at Absinth; '90s Night w/ DJ David Ardiente at Coquina; Live Rock Bands at Temple; DJs Kimozave & Chrismyx at Prince of Jaipur; Arriba at Café Havana Greenbelt; Merk & Friends at Merk's

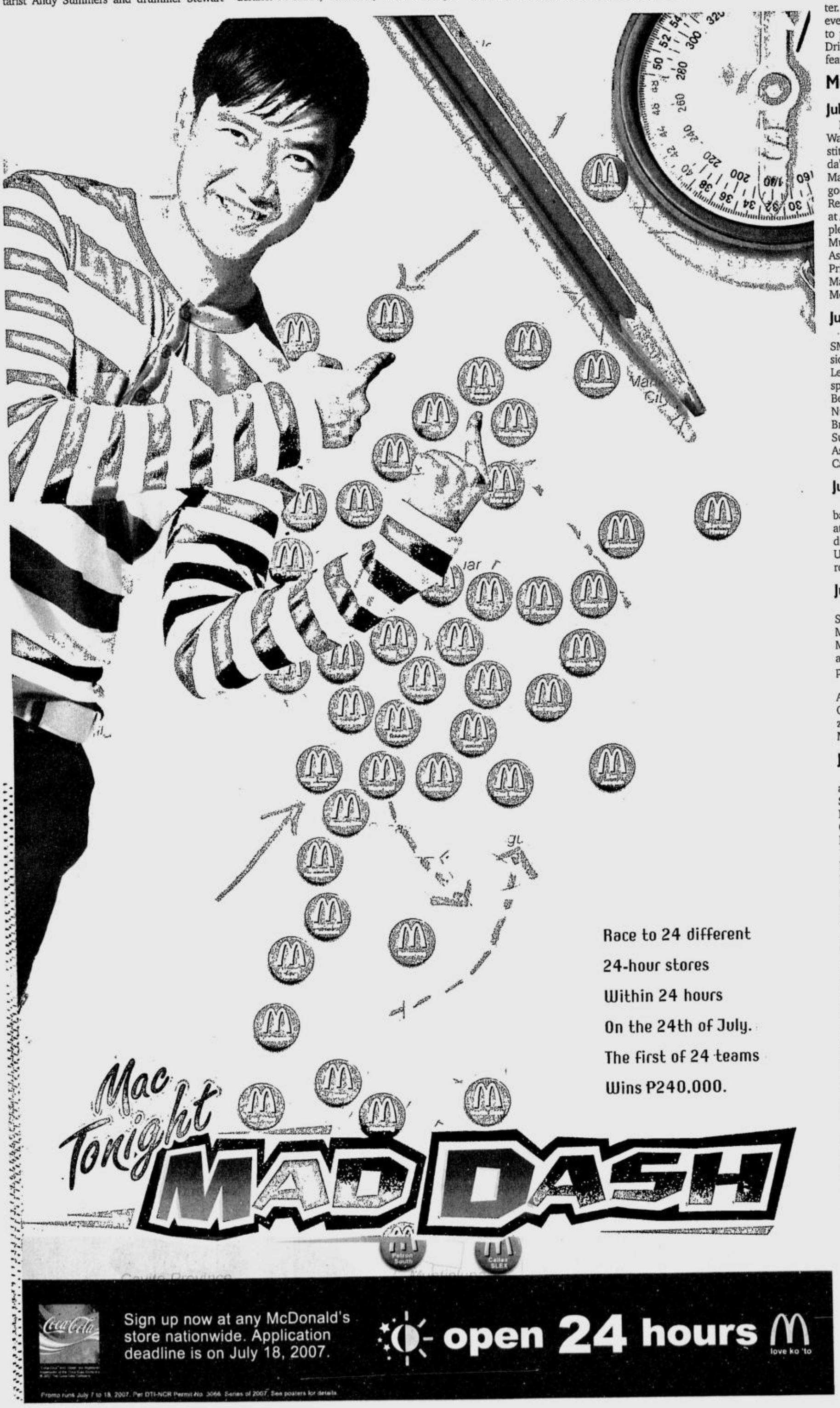
July 12, Thursday

Fabric: Fashion Night w/ Jermain Brown at Piedra; Cancer Zodiac Party at Bed; Johann Strauss Ball at Mandarin Oriental Manila; Latin Night w/ Tribo Manila at Mezze; Fluxxe: Whatever Thursdays at Absinth; Reggae Mistress at Café Havana Greenbelt; Backtrack Thursdays at Club O; Radio Coquina at Coquina; Open Mic Night at Azzurro Linden Suites; World's Fastest Open Bar at Bed; The Groove at Merk's; Rogue Magazine launch party at BMW Pavillion, Fort Bonifacio Global City; BluRoom at Martinis Bar

July 13, Friday

Military Ball at Bed; House of Soul w/ DJ Jason Soong at Alchemy; Chill by the Bay at SM Mall of Asia; Funk Fry at Mezze; Sala Ibiza w/ DJ Karl Ty at Nuvo; Elektro Disko w/ DJ Adrian Cuenca & Ms BadKiss at M Café; DJs Mark Naval & Owens Sun at Embassy Club; Decadance w/ DJ Boyet Almazan at Jill's; House Sessions at Fiamma; DJ David Ardiente at Coquina; Blu Room at Martinis Bar; MILF: Mom I Love Fridays! at Absinth; Soul Shine w/ DJ Marie Garcia at Embassy Cuisine; Jive Fridays at Temple; Arriba at Café Havana Greenbelt; The Jerks at 70s Bistro; DJ Scratchmark at Prince of Jaipur; Nuevo Ritmo at Café Havana Malate; Route 70 at Merk's

Schedules may change without prior notice. For a complete listing of events, text 24/7 GIGS to 2851 (Globe) and 2951 (Smart). Submit your schedules before Wednesday to events@mag24-7.com & mag24_7@yahoo.com.



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inquirer sup name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

You're in luck Harry Potter fans! Get to know Evanna Lynch and Bonnie Wright, aka Luna Lovegood and Ginny Weasley, in this exclusive interview

Meet Harry's gal pals at Hogwarts

OUT THE WINDOW

Tals Diaz

IN A FEW DAYS, MUGgles all over the world will be making a beeline to the theaters and bookstores to catch up on the lives of Harry Potter and his Hogwarts crew.

It's a bit like staying tuned to a seven year-long saga, for fans have hung on from chapter to chapter, and kept their eyes on the enchanting cast since they were wee wizards who left home to take up their magic wands. Now, the characters are all grown up (*sniff*), and have even started dating in what has got to be the best example of paranormal romance.

Lucky me, that I was able to catch two of Harry's gal pals, Evanna Lynch, who plays Luna Lovegood, and Bonnie Wright, cast as Ginny Weasley, in an exclusive interview. Lucky you, Harry Potterheads, that I made it through their thick Irish and English accents (with the help of a good friend) in order to get their words to y'all a few days before the movie starts. Anything to ease the pain of waiting even for just a bit!

Luna Tunes: Evanna Lynch

So JK Rowling called you the perfect person to play Luna Lovegood. Why do you think she said that? Do you have any qualities similar to Luna? Are you dreamy and spaced out?

Evanna: Yes, I have a few. I think she called me and said I was "perfect" is because I care about Luna very much and that's really important. And I really wanted to do her justice.

Have you always been a big Harry Potter fan?

E: Since I was 8, yeah. And I just keep getting bigger all the time.

Have you always been acting?

E: Nothing big before. I went to drama school and just did fun things, you know? Like plays, but not the serious stuff.

Do you want to pursue a career in acting?

E: No, I don't think so. It can be a bit fun at times but, at the moment, it can be a bit boring sometimes.

If you weren't playing Luna Lovegood, what would be the other character in Harry Potter that you'd love to play?

E: If I could—Dumbledore, I think he's so cool.

So how is your relationship like, in real life, with Daniel Radcliffe? Are you guys close?

E: We're not really close but that's because I got to know the others more cause they are always around, while he's always on the set. He's really nice and whenever I do see him he's so friendly, he's the one who made me feel at home at first because he introduced me to everyone. Yeah, he's nice.

How do you deal with fame now?

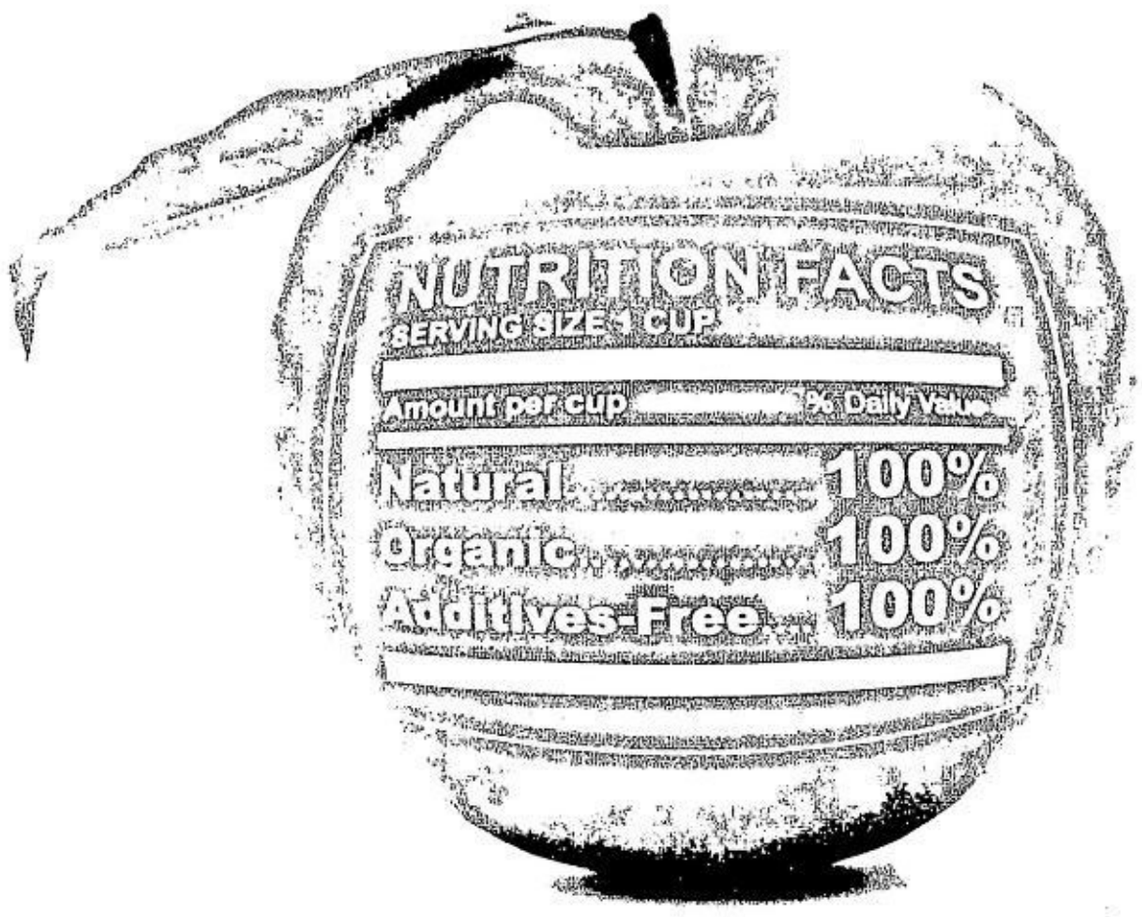
E: You know I don't really get recognized at all cause, I don't know, it's just that in Ireland people aren't that big into Harry Potter. In my hometown everyone knows me but they don't make fuss because they're used to me. It would be different after the film.

Where exactly is home?

E: Termonfeckin, in Ireland.

Termonfeckin? I wish I lived in

MEET/ D3



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NO TRANS-FATS.

NO MSG.

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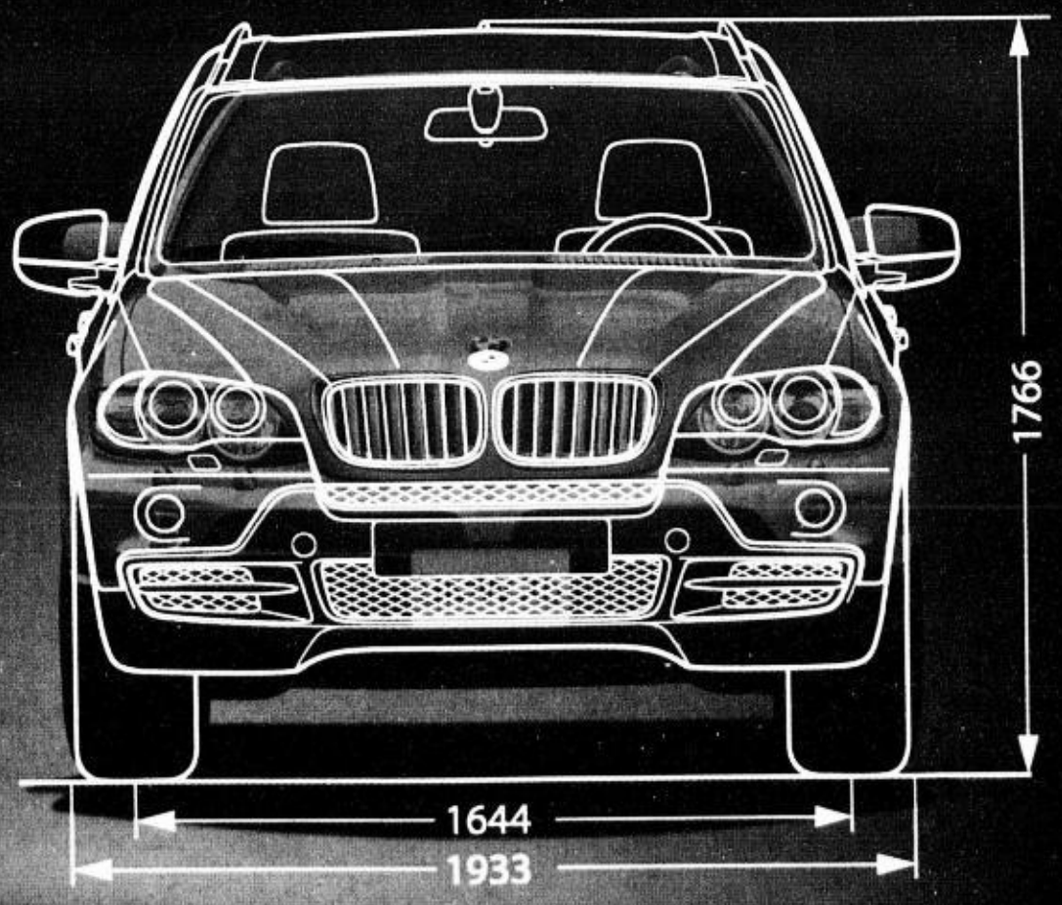
• Bonifacio High Street, Taguig • Trinoma

BMW Philippines

Sheer Driving Pleasure

Discover the Evolution towards Sheer Driving Pleasure.



BMW Xpo 2007 Evolutions
A BMW Expo Event

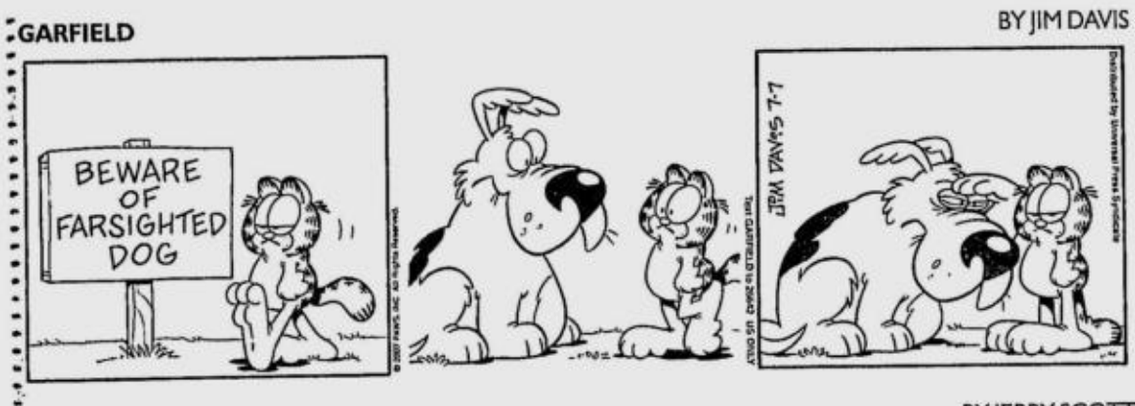
July 13, 2007, 9:00 am to 4:00 pm, July 14 & 15, 2007, 9:00 am to 10:00 pm, BMW Pavilion, Bonifacio Global City

Evolution of Motion
The latest BMW cars and motorcycles unveiled
The new BMW X5
The new BMW 6 Series
The new BMW 1 Series
BMW Motorrad Urban Models

Evolution of Excitement
Special event offers
Chance to own an exclusively crafted Vertu Ascent handset to every BMW test drive
Chance to own a Limited Edition handset from the Vertu Racetrack Legends Series with a purchase of any brand new BMW car or motorcycle
Extra generous packages for all BMW models

Evolution of Expression
Two nights of artistic passions
Rogue Magazine Madness
BMW Performance Motorcycle Art Cars Series

GARFIELD
BY JIM DAVIS

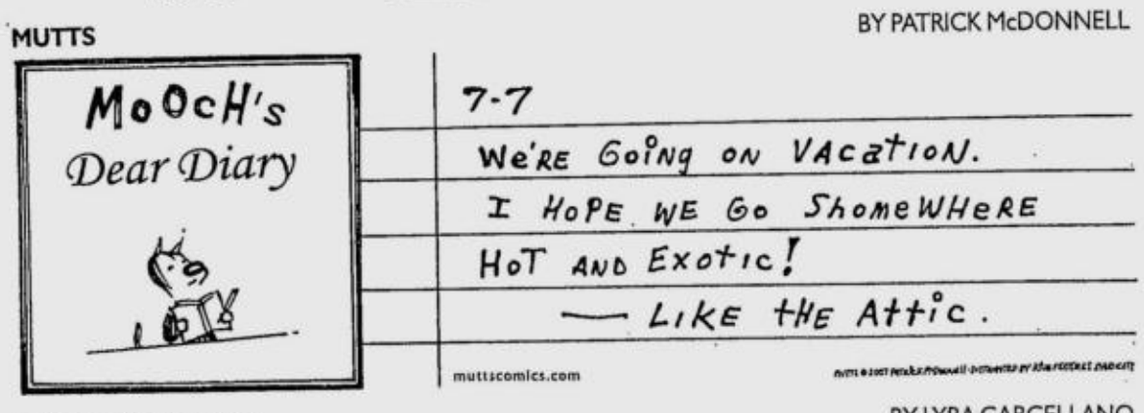


A. LIPIN
BY JESS ABRERA

BABY BLUES
BY JERRY SCOTT

PUGAD BABOY
BY P.M. JUNIOR

MUTTS
BY PATRICK McDONNELL



LOVEKNOTS
BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

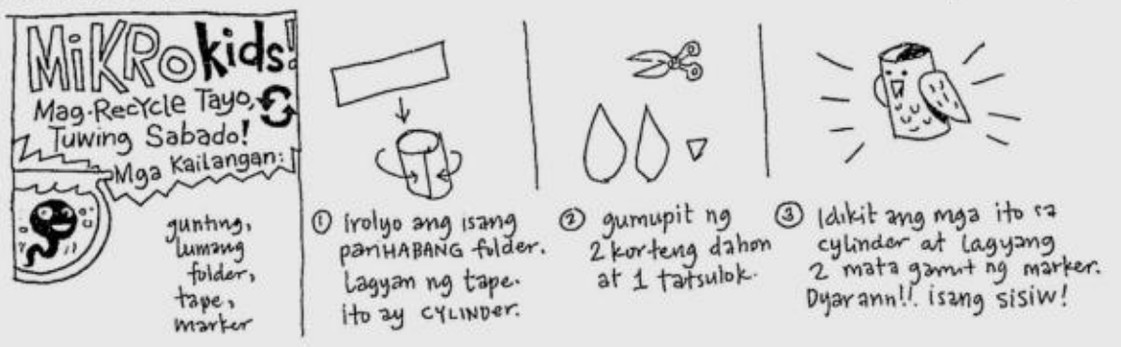
ATOMO AND WEBOY
BY LYRA GARCELLANO

DIVINE COMEDY
BY STEVEN PABALINAS

MALUBHANG NASIRA ANG VOCAL CORDS NI MIRIAM DEFENSOR-SANTIAGO DAHIL KAHIT NA ANONG SIGAW NYA, WALA PA RING IMIK ANG NAKALABAN NYA SA DEBATE

KIKO MACHINE
BY MANIX ABRERA

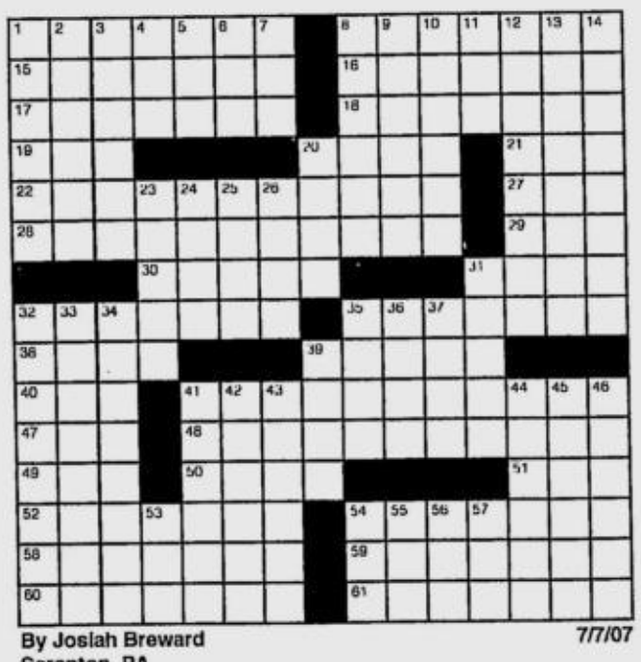
MIKROKOSMOS
BY JOMIKE TEJIDO



TULDOK
BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING

BEN
BY DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Josiah Breward
Scranton, PA
7/7/07

ACROSS
1 Portend
8 Protestant denomination
15 Time off
16 Shakespearean tragedy
17 Fatty
18 German siren
19 "Oedipus __"
20 Clytemnestra's mother
21 Russian chess master
22 Portentous platforms for planchettes
27 Verb-forming suffix
28 Hughes' eight-engine wooden seaplane
29 Sch. near Harvard
30 Prevaricators
31 Visionary
32 Remains
35 Washing machine cycle
38 Not tricked by
39 Cairo in "The Maltese Falcon"
40 "Mogambo" star Gardner
41 Dashboard instrument
47 Cacophony
48 Crossing the sea
49 Once owned
50 Places
51 Dr. Dre's genre
52 Indecent
54 Cotton State
58 Bad winner
59 Altar screen
60 Transmitters
61 Rocks on the edge

DOWN
1 Seven Wonders lighthouse
2 Arrived on horseback
3 Magic potion
4 Liquid sample
5 Fuss and pother
6 Neon or radon
7 Heart of a hurricane
8 Ravel classic
9 In conflict
10 Sentence snippet
11 Golfer's peg
12 Premature or late, e.g.
13 More tawdry
14 Toothpaste or hairbrush, e.g.
20 Vientiane's land
23 Vocalist Iglesias
24 Etcher's medium
25 Boyfriend
26 Scary monster
31 Expression of contempt
32 Selfish drivers
33 Worth having
34 Insists upon observance of
35 Lays a lawn
36 Informal formal
37 "__ la Douce"
39 Wide-angle or zoom
41 Beach S. of Clearwater
42 Tree trimmer
43 Consumers
44 Censorious address
45 Sweet-talk
46 Go by once again
53 Womanizer
54 Gallery display
55 Spike or Brenda
56 Live and breathe
57 Gambler's risk

Friday's Puzzle Solved

W	R	A	P	■	B	C	E	L	L	■	W	A	R	S
B	A	B	E	■	A	L	G	A	E	■	A	N	E	W
C	H	U	C	K	W	A	G	O	N	·	R	I	J	O
■	■	■	A	T	L	I	■	■	I	A	M	T	O	O
C	L	A	N	S	■	R	O	U	N	D	T	R	I	P
C	O	R	P	■	P	E	N	H	■	L	O	A	N	S
R	E	C	I	P	E	■	A	U	D	I	■	■	■	■
■	W	H	E	R	E	S	T	H	E	B	E	E	F	·
■	■	■	A	R	O	O	■	A	S	L	E	E	P	■
A	D	D	O	N	■	H	O	W	L	■	B	L	A	B
L	O	I	N	C	L	O	T	H	■	P	O	S	T	S
A	T	M	F	E	E	■	■	Y	E	O	W	■	■	■
M	I	M	I	■	F	L	A	N	K	S	P	E	E	D
O	M	E	R	■	T	A	H	O	E	■	A	X	L	E
S	E	R	E	■	S	P	A	T	S	■	D	E	F	Y

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HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You are highly imaginative and creative. You like to discover the truth of things, no matter how hidden. People find your observations and philosophical concepts to be meaningful in an uncanny way. You always speak your mind, even if it shocks others. You know how to organize and direct the efforts of others. Some major change could take place this year, perhaps as significant as around 1998.
Birthdate of: Ringo Starr, musician/actor; Jorja Fox, actress; Robert Heinlein, sci-fi writer.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Because the Moon is in your sign today, you feel more emotional about everything. By tomorrow, everything shifts. Just be patient.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You need a little peace and quiet or some moments of solitude today. It will suit you best to work behind the scenes or even to work alone, if you can.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You'll definitely enjoy the company of others today. In fact, group activities or group sports will appeal to you. A conversation, with a female friend in particular, could be significant.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You will draw attention to yourself today. Be aware of your appearance. Be aware of your actions. Be aware of what you say to others.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Try to do something different today, because you need a little adventure in your life! You want something different to happen. Why not go someplace you've never been before?

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You might have to deal with loose ends involving shared property this weekend. Be open to the values of others even if they don't reflect your own. Some prefer rice, some prefer bread, some prefer potatoes.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Because today's Moon is directly opposite your sign, you might feel that someone close to you is opposing your ideas. Maybe this means you have to listen better to understand what somebody else is saying.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Do whatever you can today to feel more organized. Reduce the clutter around you. Empty wastebaskets, take out the garbage, do the laundry.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): This is a playful, flirtatious day. Enjoy sports or watching a game. Catch a movie. Pleasant times with children can also delight you.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Family discussions are a bit intense today. Everyone wants to get their two cents into the picture. That's OK. Focus on your domestic environment and your private world.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): What can you do to improve your relations with neighbors, relatives and siblings? Be extra clear in all your communications with everyone today.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Focus on your cash flow today. If shopping, you might want to buy beautiful things or, alternatively, practical things that last a long time.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku — by Dave Green

9				4				6
						3		
	1	7		3	9	8		
		1						
3		5				7		4
						5		
		3	6	7		4	1	
		6						
5				8				2

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 7/07

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

5	2	8	4	6	3	9	1	7
4	6	1	8	7	9	5	2	3
7	3	9	1	2	5	6	8	4
3	7	2	9	8	4	1	5	6
1	9	4	6	5	2	7	3	8
8	5	6	7	3	1	4	9	2
2	1	7	3	9	6	8	4	5
9	8	3	5	4	7	2	6	1
6	4	5	2	1	8	3	7	9

Difficulty Level ★★★★

Meet Harry's gal . . .

From page D1

a place called Termonfeckin! Anyway, how was it like working with director David Yates?

E: It wasn't hard. Whenever you couldn't get the scene right, he talks to you and he asks you the right questions and then when you do the scene again it's easier. He just gets it. He doesn't say 'you didn't do it well at all,' or 'you did it wrong, you should do this,' he just asks you why are you doing this and what you think she is feeling and then you just get it.

So since you're character is so dreamy and spaced out all the time, do you find that, even after the movie, you're still like Luna Lovegood?

E: Oh yeah! Definitely. I think, I become more like her, strange, but that's because I like her and I don't mind that she's rubbing off on me. But I'm starting to lose that a bit.

There are a lot of Harry Potter fans here in the Philippines. Could you give them all a message?

E: Hi to everyone there in the Philippines, well, enjoy this movie and keep being a Harry Potter fan!

Ginny Unbottled: Bonnie Wright

Hey Bonnie! Have you always been a Harry Potter fan?

Bonnie: Yeah, I've always read the books with great interest and I would get excited when the next one was coming out.

What is your favorite book in the series so far?

B: I think they are all different, they all get better and better but I really enjoyed the one that just came out, the sixth book. I also really enjoyed the fourth one as well but I like all of them, really.

Did you want to play Ginny Weasley or did you think you would have wanted to play another role?

B: No, when I first got the role, for the first film, I really didn't know a lot about the books then; I only was just about to read the first book. My brother has read them and he always said that I reminded him of the character Ginny. Then I heard about the film and that was the character I thought I initially would play.

Among all of the movies that you came out in, which movie did you have most fun in?

I think everyone thinks different because each one had a different director to feature them, and that makes each one kinda different. So I kinda enjoyed all of them in kinda different ways. They all have been as fun.

For this movie, with a different director, David Yates, how was your relationship like with working with him compared to the other directors?

B: I really enjoyed working with David Yates. He's a real kind of an action director. He likes to really grow a real relationship with all his cast and also he wants you to have your personal input into the character and what she is feeling, he or she is feeling, in that particular scene. That was really nice to be really involved in what is happening.

Does it feel a little awkward that you'll be kissing Harry in the movie?

B: Not really. I mean, we all read what will happen in the next one so I think it is not really awkward because it's all really acting so I think we'll see when we come to it.

So how is your relationship with Daniel like in real life? Are you friends?

B: Yeah, definitely! Friends with him and all the cast members and it's nice because we keep contact when we are not filming because there is quite a big gap between the films and it would be a shame if we don't speak to each other until the next film.

Who else in the cast are you close to?

B: We're close to Dan, Rupert, Emma, Katie and Evanna is in there in the later film. James and Oliver, they play my brothers in the film, so definitely we're close.

Do you get stopped on the street? Because fans have a way of blurring reality and fantasy, do fans think that you really are Ginny Weasley?

B: Yeah, I think some people can be quite drawn to first thinking that you are Ginny Weasley and that's your character but I think most of the time that it is positive in a way that people really liked you in the film and they kind of treat you as a normal person. I think, also, what interests them is seeing you on the screen and then seeing you for real. It's kind of weird—seeing us as ourselves than rather dressed up in our character's outfits and playing our characters.

Any parting words to the millions of fans out there?

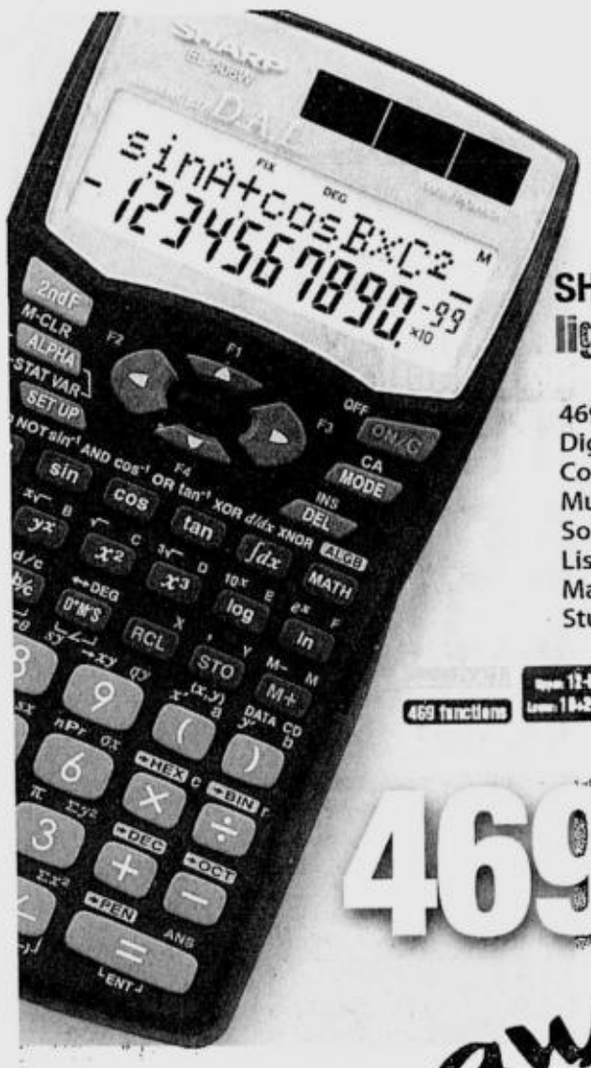
B: I think it is a really, really good film. I've seen it and when we were filming it, you could definitely get that kind of feeling that it'd be very different and much darker. It becomes very concentrated and really, creepy weird sort of dark. And there's Voldemort and Dumbledore; the relationships build a lot in this film. And I think the Ministry of Magic is a really careful scene and a frightening scene to watch out for.

CLASS STRUGGLE. The Hogwarts gang is back in "Order of the Phoenix."

STICKING TOGETHER. James Phelps as Fred Weasley, Bonnie Wright as Ginny Weasley, Rupert Grint as Ron Weasley, and Oliver Phelps as George Weasley

BONNIE WRIGHT as Ginny Weasley

PHOTOS COURTESY OF WARNER BROS. PHILIPPINES



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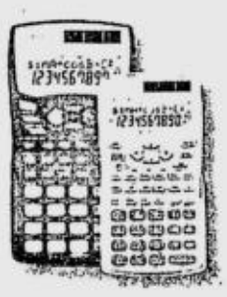

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- Digital Algebraic Logic (DAL) allows entry of symbols and numbers of equations as they are written
- Large solid keys with a crisp 2-line display that allows user to check equations and answer at the same time
- Multi Line Playback recalls up to 142 recent steps
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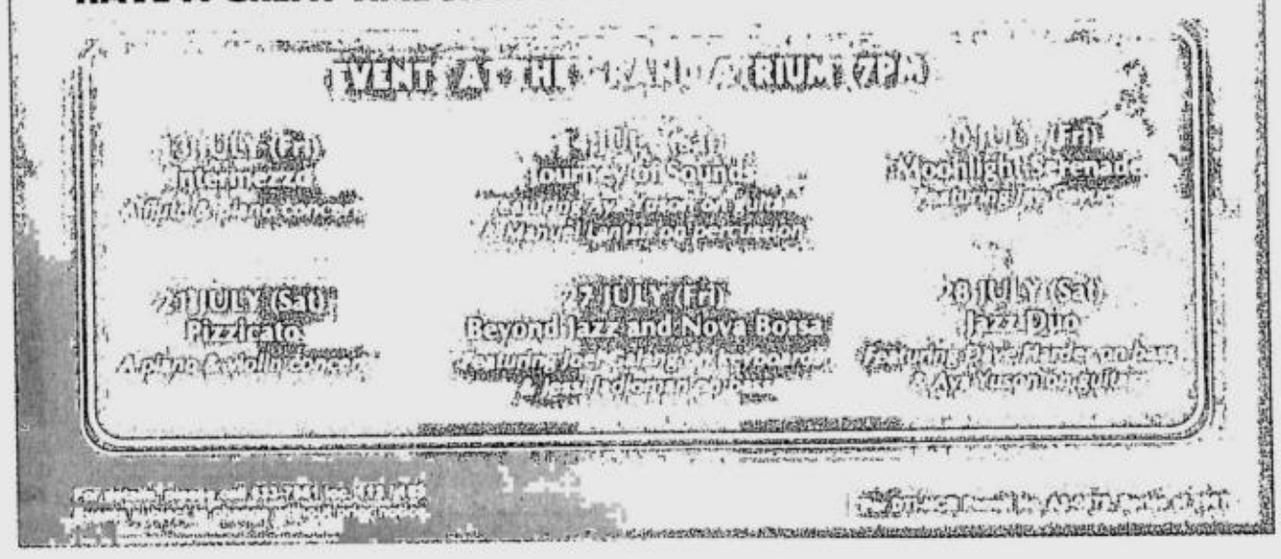

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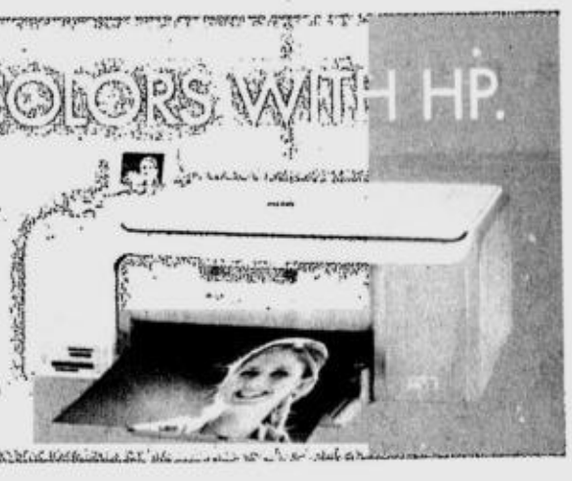

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- Integrated 2.4" colour graphic display
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- Built-in Ethernet networking, 6 individual inks

HP PHOTOSMART C6180 ALL-IN-ONE
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- Print and copy at up to 32 ppm (black) or 31 ppm (colour)
- Direct photo printing - pictbridge, bluetooth and memory card slots
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HP OFFICEJET 5610 ALL-IN-ONE
P9,990
- Printer, scanner, copier, fax
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- Print and copy at up to 20 ppm (black) or 13ppm (colour)
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- Scan up to 1200 x 2400 dpi optical resolution / 48-bit
- 25-page ADF and fax

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2. Two ways to claim:
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   a. Sales Invoice/Official receipt
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   Yeaps Corporation's contact information are as follows: Telephone No.: (02) 7532558; Fax No.: (02) 845-1634, Email Address: hp_synergy@yeaps.com, Office Address: 2306 Herrera Tower, Rufino corner Valero Street, Salcedo Village Makati City

   Option 2: You may also claim the Crocs Footwear directly at Crocs Store (02) 856-1358 located at Bonifacio High Street Bonifacio Global City, Tagaig City. Just present and submit above documents cited in OPTION 1
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Choose from any of the following free Crocs footwear.

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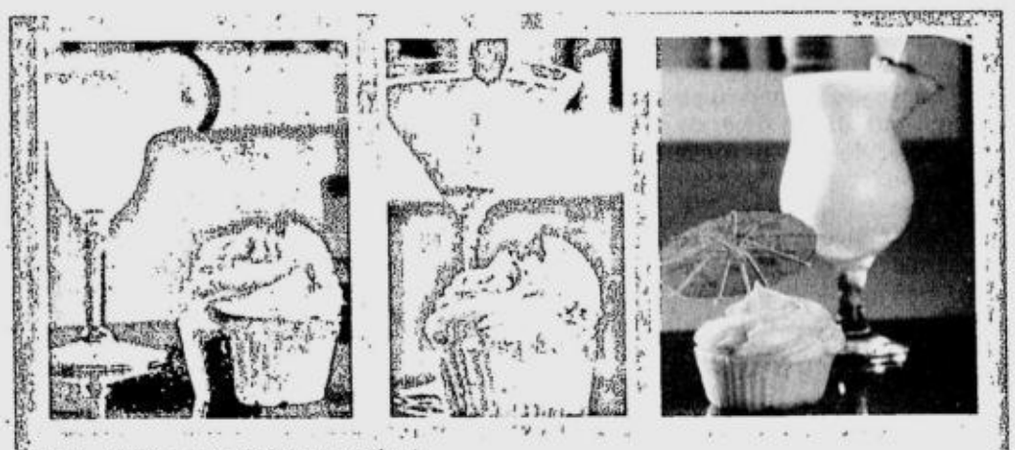
For DTI Permit No. 1382, Series of 2007

SUPER SELECTIONS!

Sweet E-motion

By Tals Diaz

TRANSFORMING IS NO LONGER JUST THE MAIN PREMISE OF A hit movie with robots; it's a prescribed lifestyle. Take it from these lucky discoveries! From spiked sweets to safer streets, you just know that the world is a better place.



"Sometimes, too much to drink is barely enough," Mark Twain once said, after what could only be imagined as a helluva good night. Now if only he, along with other well-loved sots like Hemingway and Frank Sinatra lived to today, they'd be first in line to snap up these cocktail-inspired cupcakes! Make that cuptails—yes, they are original cupcakes inspired by the favorite cocktails on the drink list. Truly, there are just some things that are proof there is a God. 80 Proof, in fact.

Cuptails and Dreams is behind the bar on this one. They've transformed the classic Margarita, Piña Colada, Tequila Sunrise, Screaming O, Mojito, Blowjob, and Cosmopolitan into sweet and supremely delicious cupcakes. The Screaming O is a hands down favorite, with vodka, Bailey's Irish cream and Kahlua-flavored icing. Ssshweet! For the responsible drivers: don't worry about getting drunk on these delights. The hint of liquor will give you the taste of your favorite cocktails, but still keep you sober all night long.

It all started out as a late night idea for Dan and Reena Francisco, who's been baking since she was 6 and is actually an affiliate of The Gourmet Bread. The idea turned out into a "mini project," but is now on an unstoppable flight path fueled by the word-of-mouth power of Manila's urbanites. It's the perfect dessert to have at parties and weddings, for it is its own conversation piece—the cupcakes even resemble the cocktails. Yep, the Margarita cupcake even comes with a slice of lime.

Finally you have your drink and eat it too. Now this is what you could call a just dessert! For more information and orders, e-mail them at order@cuptailsanddreams.com or call 09275653261. *(Photos by Rico Ramoso, taken at Magnet Café, Bonifacio High Street)*

Al Gore would've been proud. A few days ago, the E-Jeepney, or the Electric Jeepney, made its first ride on streets of Makati. It is the first public transport system of its kind in Southeast Asia, an electric-powered wonder machine inspired by the Philippine icon. Now if the E-Jeep were a Transformer, it would be an Autobot fighting for the side of good! The E-Jeep aspires to be less of a menace to society unlike its predecessors, by steering clear of the use of pollution-causing fossil fuels help mitigate climate change. The E-Jeep was launched by GRIPP (Green Renewable Independent Power Producer), Greenpeace and the Makati City Government. Let's just hope that there'll be matching street-friendly drivers to go along with the eco-friendly machines!

Kapag ang anak mo pabalik-balik ang ahhchoos—malamang, 'di na 'yan sipon!

If you think that your kid has an ordinary cold, CHECK AGAIN! Kasi kapag may pabalik-balik na AHHCHOOS, RUNNY NOSE at WATERY EYES, malamang 'di na 'yan sipon! Most likely, he has ALLERGIC RHINITIS! Kaya 'di ito makukuha lang ng juice or regular cold medicines*. Dapat pedia-recommended BENADRYL AH SYRUP. It effectively relieves the most bothersome symptoms of allergic rhinitis!

Don't forget! Kung may pabalik-balik na AHHCHOOS, RUNNY NOSE AT WATERY EYES--malamang, allergic rhinitis yan! I-BENADRYL AH SYRUP!

*refers to cold medicines without antihistamines only.

AHHHHHIa ng ahhchoos!

Ahhchoo!!! Ahhchoo!!! Ahhchoo!!!

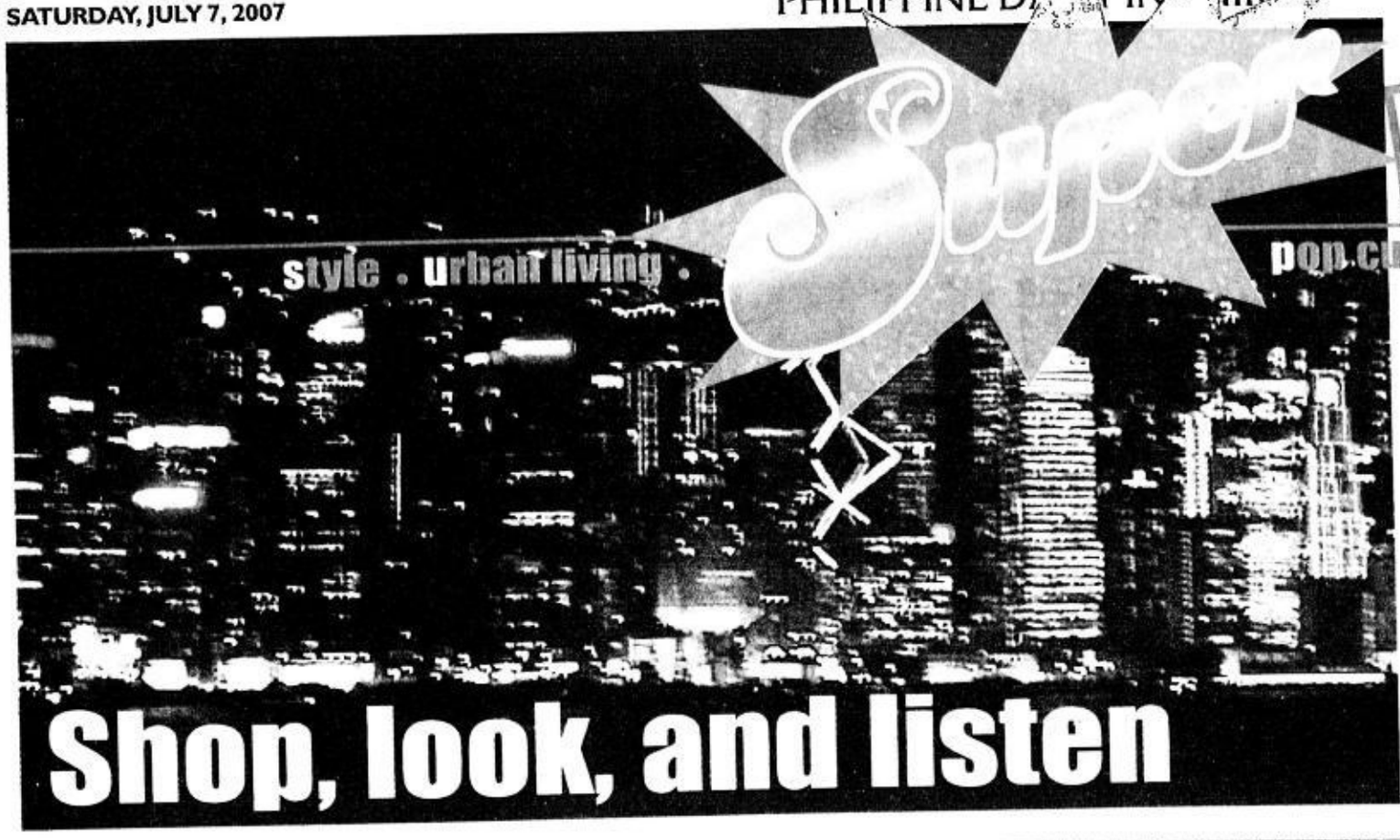
Baka may allergic rhinitis ka na!

Check out the difference between allergic rhinitis and common cold

SYMPTOMS	COMMON COLDS	ALLERGIC RHINITIS
Frequent and Regular Sneezing	X	✓
Stuffy Nose	✓	✓
Runny Nose	✓	✓
Itchy Eyes	X	✓
Fever	✓	X
Sore Throat	✓	X
Nasal Discharge	✓	✓ Usually clear
Body aches and pains	✓	X
Triggers/ Causes	Viruses	Allergens (pollen, house dust mites, molds)
Duration	Lasts about a week	Lasts as long as the allergens are present
What your doctor may advice	Rest, fluids, pain relievers, decongestants	BENADRYL AH

Remember! Basta allergic rhinitis, Benadryl AH!

AHHHHHIa ng ahhchoos!



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sup name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

recreation

Lost in Yiu Wah Street and whatevz

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NOW OPEN! BINONDO BRANCH

This year's Hong Kong Shopping Festival is even more special as Asia's World City puts on its party pants for the 10th Anniversary of the Handover

Age against the machine

Gino de la Paz

Photos by Heidi Pascual

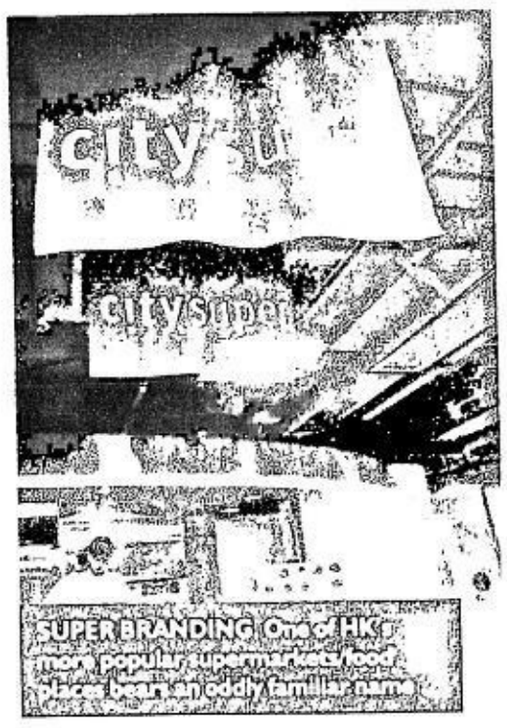
IF HONG KONG IS ASIA'S SHOPping Mecca, then July is the month when the deeply religious come to worship and attain enlightenment. From upscale designer temples to downtown consumer chapels, the cadence of rustling plastic bags and credit cards fulfilling their life's mission is unmistakable. If you ask me, it's an East infection of the most glorious kind.

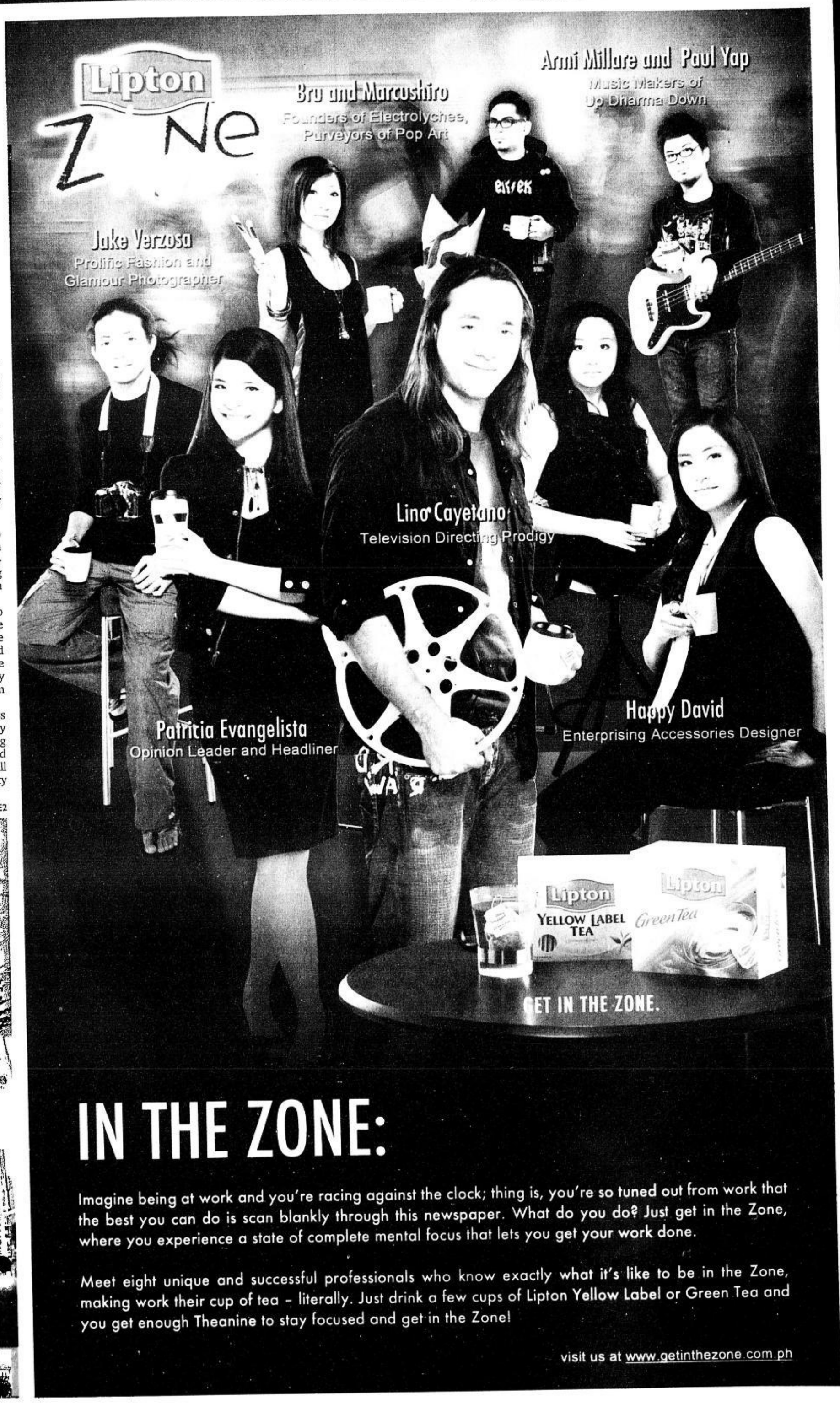
I've been extremely, extremely lucky to have lived it and loved it at this tiny urban paradise a couple dozen times already. However, I still manage to pick up something word-of-mouth-worthy every time. Yay, I'm not jaded! Obvz.

This recent trip, for example, I learned to line up at the kids floor at H&M to avoid the too-long/don't bother queues in front of the first floor and basement cashiers. And mind you, that tip applies to all H&Ms all over the world. (I also learned that being a skinny dude pays off, since I can still cop stuff from the boys' section. Whut.)

Anyway, to help you navigate the craziness that is the annual Shopping Festival, here's my list of new essential spots to hit while in the Hong to the Kong. They're all guaranteed to yield goodies, memories, and credit card bills that will last much, much longer than a Handover party hangover. Time to shut up and shop!

SHOP/ E2





IN THE ZONE:

Imagine being at work and you're racing against the clock; thing is, you're so tuned out from work that the best you can do is scan blankly through this newspaper. What do you do? Just get in the Zone, where you experience a state of complete mental focus that lets you get your work done.

Meet eight unique and successful professionals who know exactly what it's like to be in the Zone, making work their cup of tea – literally. Just drink a few cups of Lipton Yellow Label or Green Tea and you get enough Theanine to stay focused and get in the Zone!

visit us at www.getinthezone.com.ph

Shop, look, and listen

LCX

The vibe: After-school shopping hotspot

The buzz: With restaurants, toys, and clothes hanging out the butt, LCX is a concept store aimed at beyond-trendy teens, post-teens, and their charitable parents. On the one hand, you'll find Italian threads from the likes of GAS and Miss Sixty. On the other, count on spotting chick-friendly clothes by Japan's Super Lovers or regulation sportswear from Canadian power brand, Roots. Of course, Hong Kong is in the house thanks to fashion stores Salad, ztampz and Azona A02.

Whether you're aching to cart home Ksubi jeans, quirky string lights, or Evisu kicks, you can spend a huge part of the day here. So make sure to spike your mineral water with some Red Bull for an extra retail energy boost and yeah, go nuts.

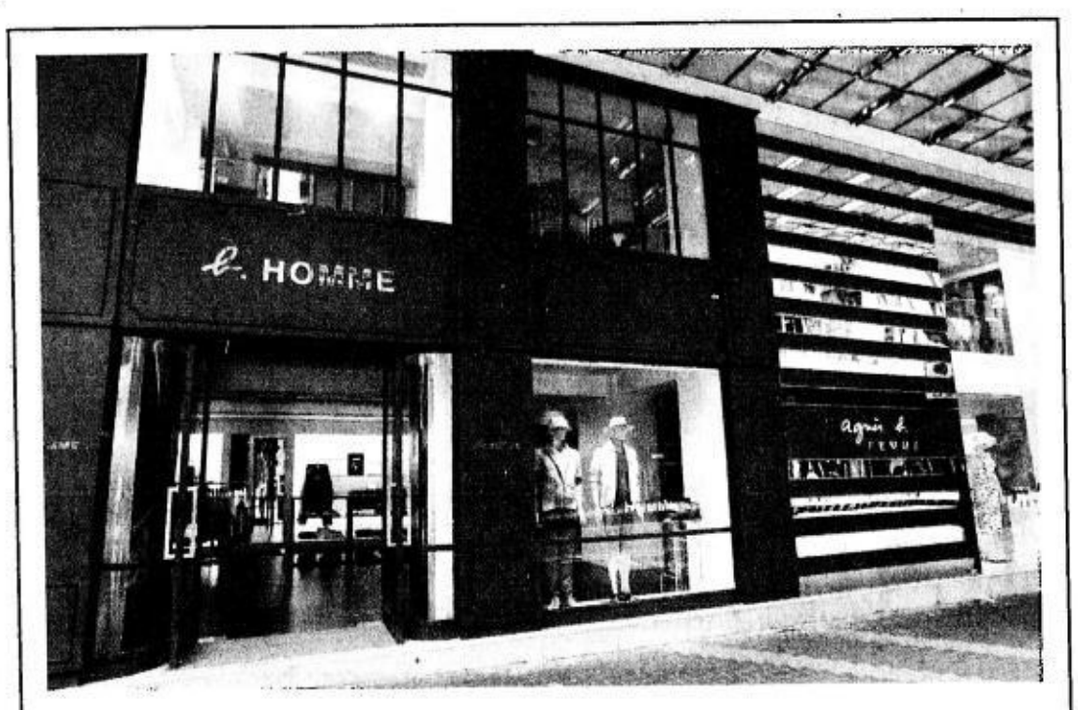
The stats: L3, Ocean Terminal, Harbour City, Canton Road, Tsim Sha Tsui (Tsim Sha Tsui MTR Exit E). Open from 10:30 a.m. - 9 p.m., Mondays to Sundays.

Sushi One

The vibe: Superfresh fast food

The buzz: Insanely popular with the locals, Sushi One hits the spot because of two important things: Good quality and low prices. The different kinds of sushi—Brad Pitt Roll, anyone?—tempura, and sashimi they serve are so majorly fresh I couldn't help but think they fished them out of the colorful salt-water tanks dotting the restaurant. Without being too dramatic, I can say that one of the best sushi meals I've had in my life was in Hong Kong. I've got the extra pounds from Sushi One to prove it.

The stats: 48 Cameron Road, Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon; 29 Leighton Road, Causeway Bay. Expect to pay about HK$51-120 per person.



Agnès b. le pain grillé

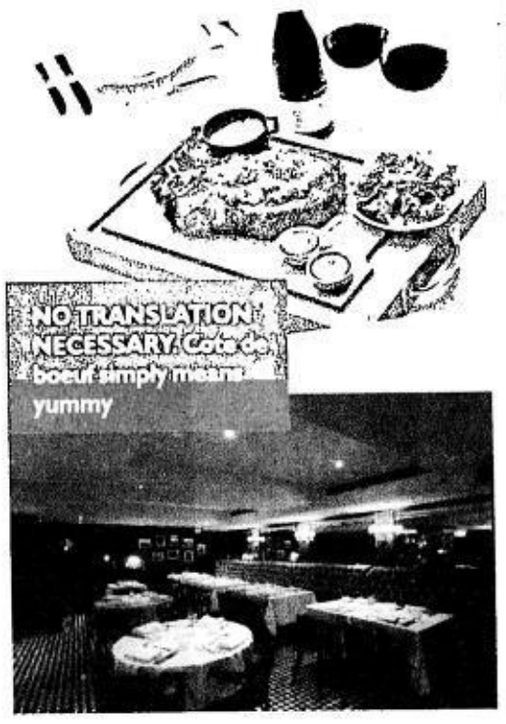
The vibe: Ooh la love

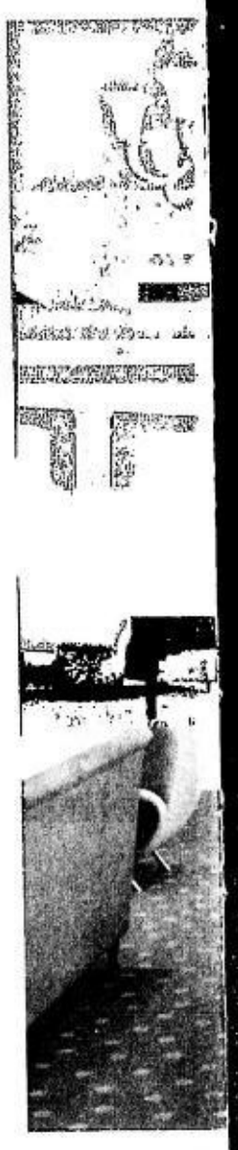
The buzz: Are we in Paris or Causeway Bay? It's kinda hard to tell. Connected to the two-story flagship store, the Agnès b. Café, or *le pain grillé*—a Frenchy term for toasted bread—is pure Parisian steez.

For starters, the menu brings the best of French gastronomy to Hong Kong. Lunch is all about light meals, like salads, sandwiches, and traditional crepes. (I strongly suggest the *le croque tartiflette*. When your high school French fails you as you order, point.) Dinner, meanwhile, is a more offhand theatrical chic—oven-baked foie gras or whole roasted lobster with garlic butter and flamed with Absinthe, for instance. While you're at it, check out their yummy cake and pastry corner and take some back to your hotel. Remember to pay for them first.

The décor will totally appeal to avowed design fanatics. Inspired by one of designer Agnès b.'s favorite eras, the café is dripping with 70s nostalgia, from the vintage armchairs down to the supercool graphic walls. In addition, the inner part of the restaurant takes its cue from the Underground; Dimly-lit with a velvety, treasure-hunt atmosphere, it's cozy, quirky, and romantic. Agnès b. was certainly right when she decided to open her first-ever café in Hong Kong. Agnès b. = love.

The stats: Shop 1 & 2A Kingston Street, Causeway Bay. Open from 12:00 nn to 11:30 p.m., Mondays to Thursdays and Sundays; 12:00 noon to 12:30 a.m., Fridays and Saturdays. Expect to spend about HK$200 for lunch and a bit more for dinner.





Lanson Pla

The vibe: No ba

The buzz: It's t
and stylish. The S
Boutique Hotel o
Place Hotel is a po
to deluxe lodging.

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execs getting the
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trip to the Far East.

Apart from th
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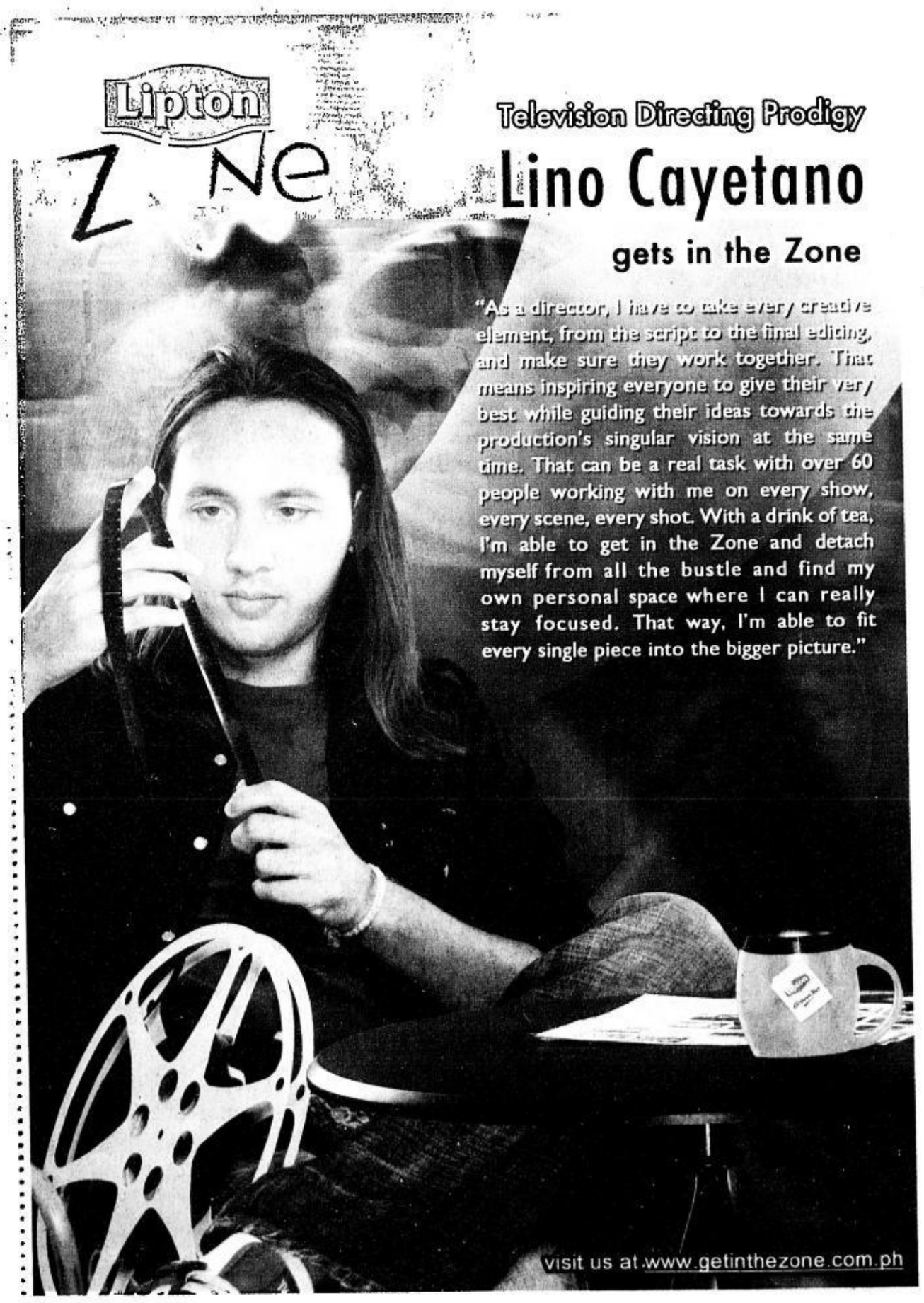
They'll love you ei
Hussein Chalayan



Plot thickens

From page E4

On Pinoy Spec Fic

Speculative Fiction is the literature of the imagination. As an umbrella term, it encompasses fantasy, science fiction, horror, magical realism, and interstitial fiction. As Filipino storytellers, it is high time we reclaim the magical stories of our cultural past, create new myths for today and project our thoughts into the realm of tomorrow. Spec Fic offers an alternate lens for looking at things, engaging the sense of wonder that is absent in most realist readings.

Now readers can find fantastic fiction—Story Philippines, Philippines Free Press, and Digest of Philippines Genre Stories are publications that welcome speculative fiction with open arms. In addition, there is the annual anthology "Philippine Speculative Fiction" that I edit, as well as various places online.

Vim Nadera

The state of Phililippine literature is alive. Before only university-based publishing houses, aside from the defunct Kalikasan Press and the indefatigable Anvil Publishing Inc., were the old reliables for budding or veteran creative writers. Now, Milflores Publishing, owned by writers Antonio and Cristina Hidalgo, are nagging us for our manuscripts, from spooky stories to literatures on insomnia. Now orature is also kicking. Conspiracy Garden Café, owned by Joey Ayala, Gary Granada, Cynthia Alexander and other artists, has Conspiwriters Tuesdays which I host regularly.

They also have literary readings at the mag:net gallery, Newsdesk, and the immortal Penguin Café. NCCA for the past two or three years has been supportive of our Balagtasan group together with Teo Antonio and Mike Coroza, who himself has a regular radio program called Harana ng Puso featuring kundimans and other indigenous poetic forms. Cooky Tuason has a regular program featuring spoken word and a group called Romancing Venus that already had recordings.

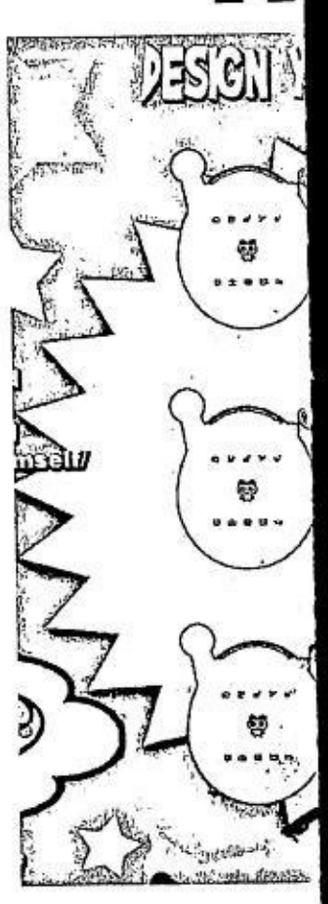
Last year, I directed and produced a CD recording of some of the poems of Alejandro G. Abadilla, entitled Kaakuhan, to celebrate the centennial of the Father of Modernist poetry in Filipino.

The state of literature is also getting better because of the creative writing centers. We at the Likhaan/UP Institute of Creative Writing hold an annual national writers workshop. The two other national workshops are in Silliman University in the Visayas and the Mindanao State University-Iligan Institute of Technology in Mindanao. And there are other regional workshops, including the ones conducted by an influential group of Ilocano writers called Gumil.

On Postmodern Lit

We are in a postmodern world of anything goes. There are no real trends or traditions to speak of. Skinheads can coexist with the Christ look-alikes, among others. In literature, the forms range from prehistoric or prehispanic up to the avant-garde. Poems, fictions and nonfictions, and plays (from stage to radio to television to film) sometimes blur their borders. They talk about anything under the sun, be it in the romantic or realistic or surrealistic or radical way—in dealing with, say, Marxism, feminism, homosexuality, or post-colonialism.

Integrated or integrative arts are the key at times. Holism. West meeting East, or South meeting North. Science marrying Art. Aside from being a performance artist, I'm also a poetry therapist. I use poetry as therapy.



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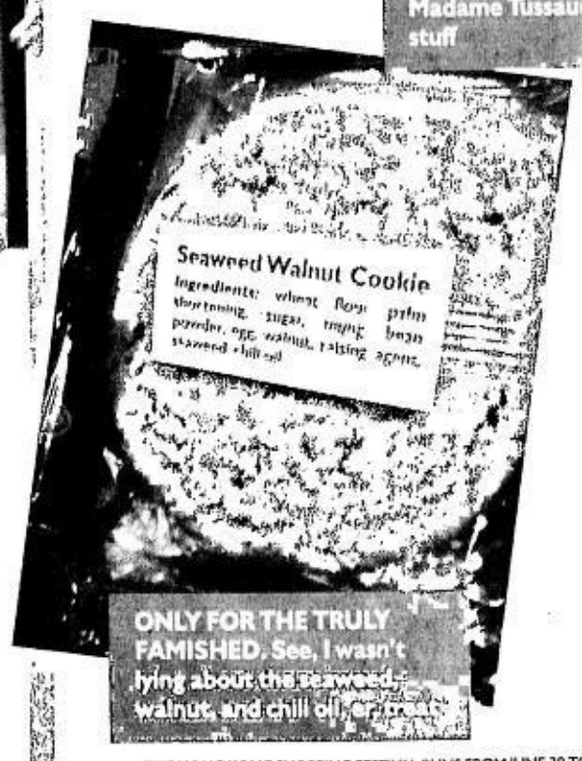


ONLY FOR THE TRULY FAMISHED. See, I wasn't lying about the seaweed, walnut, and chili oil, or pork

WAXING, UHM, LYRICAL. LOLsing at Madame Tussauds and stuff

THE HONG KONG SHOPPING FESTIVAL RUNS FROM JUNE 30 TO AUGUST 31, 2007. WWW.DISCOVERHONGKONG.COM. SPECIAL THANKS TO PERCEPTIONS INC. AND MAYEE TANG, CONNIE KWOK, LAMBERT CHAN, AND FRED CHEUNG OF THE HONG KONG TOURISM BOARD.

ce Hotel

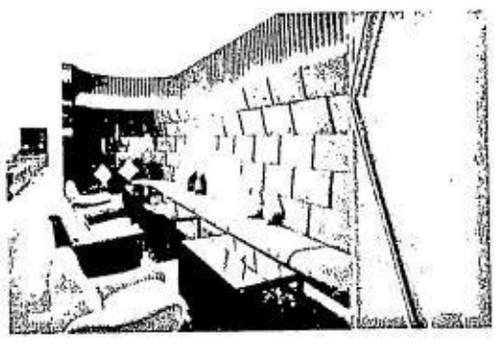
:kpackers in sight

ue. Small can be beautiful

outh China Morning Post's f the Year 2007, Lanson t office building turned in-

mash-up of 1900's Euro- flourishes and interiors 00s, a typical Lanson Place would probably involve Ital- glass chandeliers, Bieder- odes; and posses of Spanish the Olsen twins. Or British r morning coffee on. Or ish families on their first Well; you get the picture.

e loungey interiors and , Lanson Place Hotel also : Steps away from Chanel, the mini-maze known as The hotel staff is smile-gen- n them to hand you an um- ather is slightly nasty, pull with the hotel's history, or hinese treats in your room and chili cookies, y/n?). her way, whether you're in r Hollister.



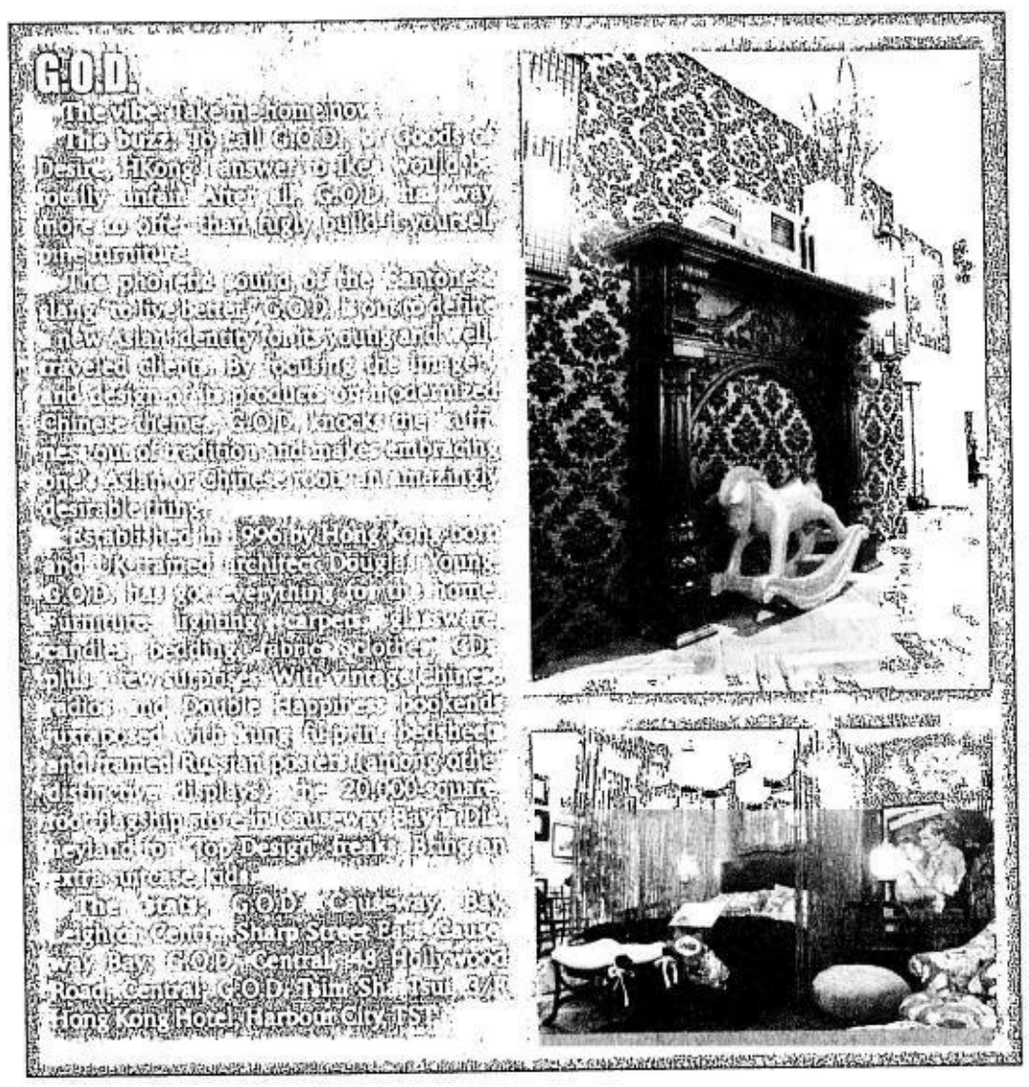
The stats: 133 Leighton Road, Causeway Bay. Guest rooms start at HK$2,300/night, inclusive of breakfast.

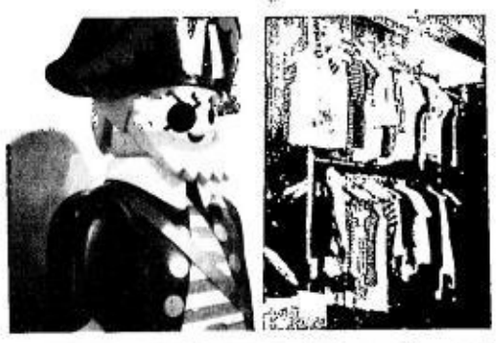
apm

The vibe: Late-night mallrat magnet

The buzz: Since opening its doors two years ago, apm—a.m. and p.m. name-blended, yo—is 630,000 square feet of fun, fun, and more fun in Kowloon East. How could it be anything else? One, there's a row of HKong's homegrown labels, like 2%, Indu Homme, and k2, and well-loved outposts like D-Mop and Muji. Two, there's a sick number of places to get your chow on in case you get the mid-shopping munchies. Last, there are six cinemas to bum around in. A devoted and conspicuously under-21 crowd calls apm home, from the moment it opens sometime during lunch, till closing time, which is 2 a.m.

The stats: Millennium City 5, 418 Kwun Tong Road, Kowloon.





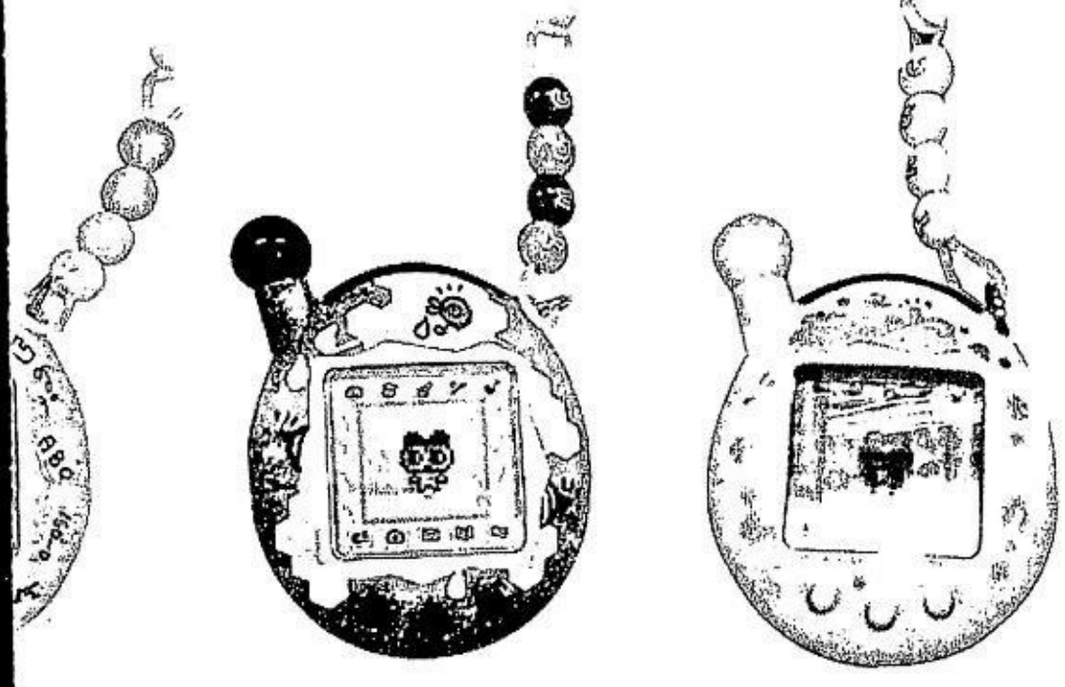
Juice

The vibe: High-end street cred

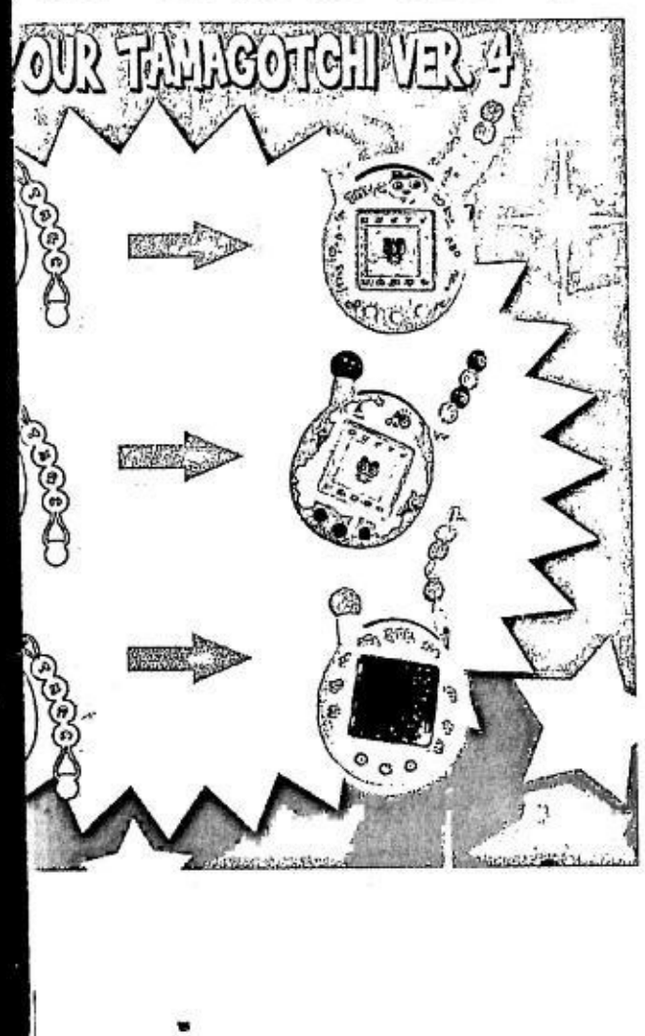
The buzz: Like Ali Baba's top-secret cave, Juice has tons of style booty for those who know exactly where to look. Located in a random building on busy Paterson St., across a Vivienne Westwood boutique, the store has no obnoxious sign to draw unwanted attention onto itself. Providing gear for those in-the-know, Juice attracts the requisite legion of Japanese street-style connoisseurs and flocks of fangirls and fanboys, all hoping to catch a glimpse of Asian youth icon, Edison Chen. (The homeboy from "Initial D" happens to own the place.)

The merch spans cult labels from Japan, Australia, and everywhere else the Prada pack has conveniently overlooked. Keep your peepers peeled for cool stuff from Pam, Silas, Revolver, and Medicom Toys. A clear lust-have is pricey denim (HK$4,000 and up) by insider Japanese brand, Neighborhood. Edison and co. also had sneakerheads in mind when they set up Juice, hitting gold with their selection of limited edition Nikes. Score!

The stats: 2/F A, 53 Paterson St, Causeway Bay. www.clotinc.com



he 90s are back



OR MAYBE NOT. BUT TAMAGOTchis are. And this time, everyone's beloved virtual pets have gotten a major upgrade with Tamagotchi V4. This version allows you to control the future of your pet by playing mini games and sending them to school to earn virtual Skill Points. Your pet can later on become a rock star, fashion designer, doctor and much more. Its infrared technology allows you to connect units together so your pets can exchange gifts, play games, become friends. You can also store info on up to 45 virtual buddies.

And if playing with your Tamagotchi V4 leaves you wanting a bigger Tamagotchi thrill, join the Tamagotchi V4 design contest and create your own dream pet. This month, Bandai, the makers of Tamagotchi Connection, will make it possible for lucky Tamagotchi enthusiasts to win up to P10,000 worth of Bandai & Tamagotchi items by coming up with their own Tamagotchi design. And the best part? Bandai will actually manufacture the winning design. Log on to www.bankee.com.ph or www.kzone.com.ph for design contest mechanics. Tamagotchi Version 4 design contest is open to all enthusiasts up to 18 years old. Deadline of submission of entries is on July 22. Judging will be held on July 29 at the Grand Atrium of Shangri-La Plaza Mall.

Lipton
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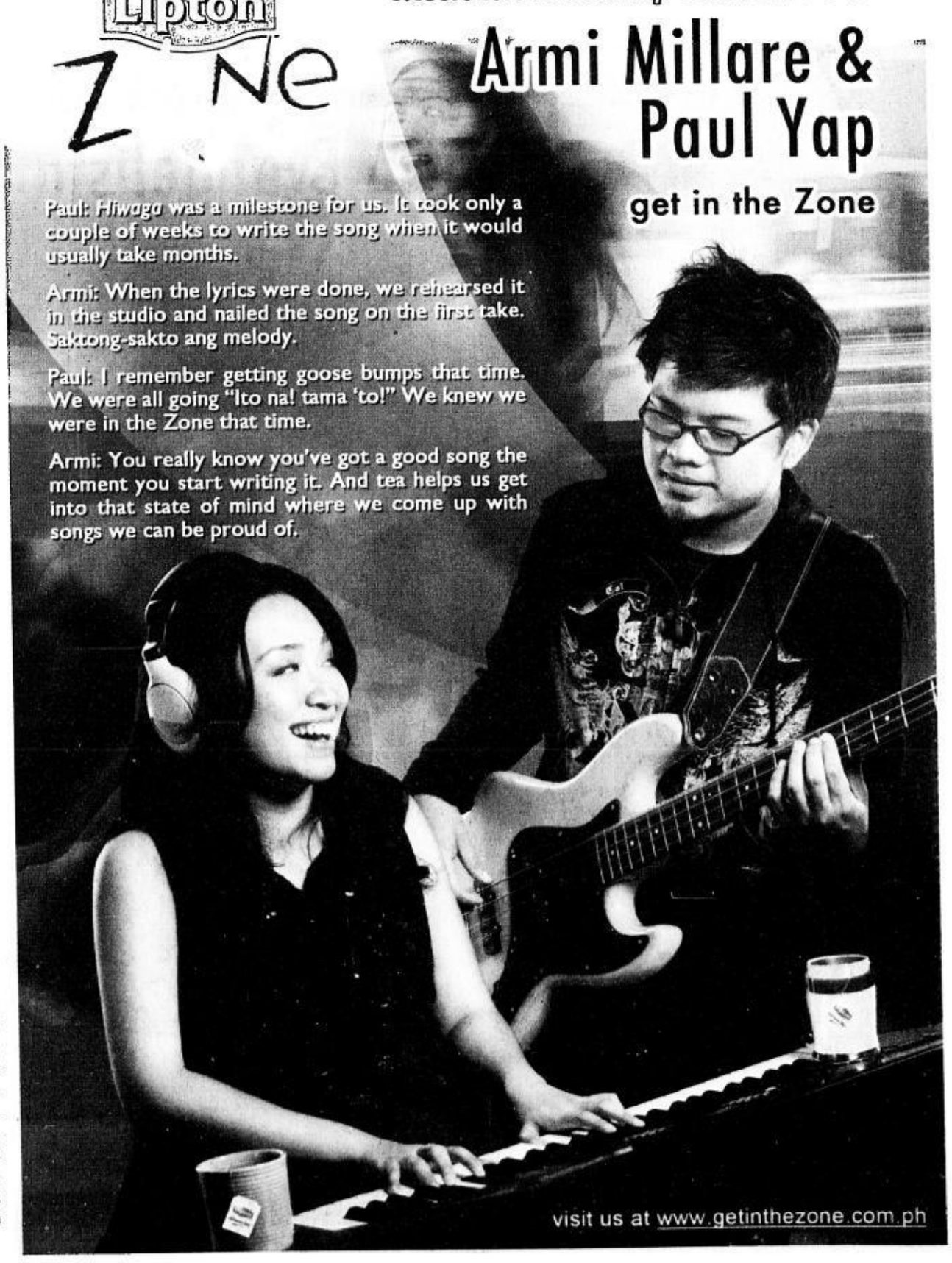
Music Makers of Up Dharma Down
Armi Millare & Paul Yap
get in the Zone

Paul: *Hiwaga* was a milestone for us. It took only a couple of weeks to write the song when it would usually take months.

Armi: When the lyrics were done, we rehearsed it in the studio and nailed the song on the first take. Saktong-sakto ang melody.

Paul: I remember getting goose bumps that time. We were all going "Ito na! tama 'to!" We knew we were in the Zone that time.

Armi: You really know you've got a good song the moment you start writing it. And tea helps us get into that state of mind where we come up with songs we can be proud of.



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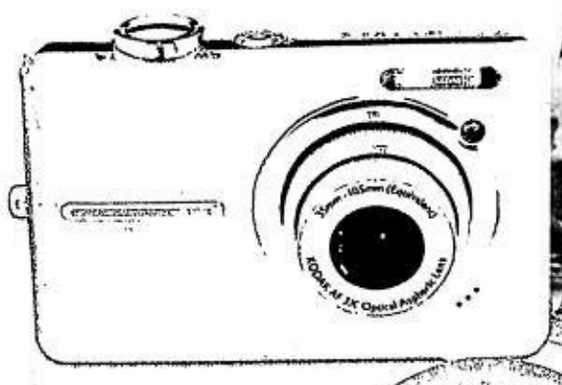

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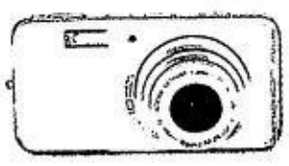

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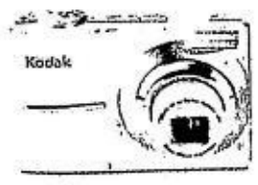

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Lipton

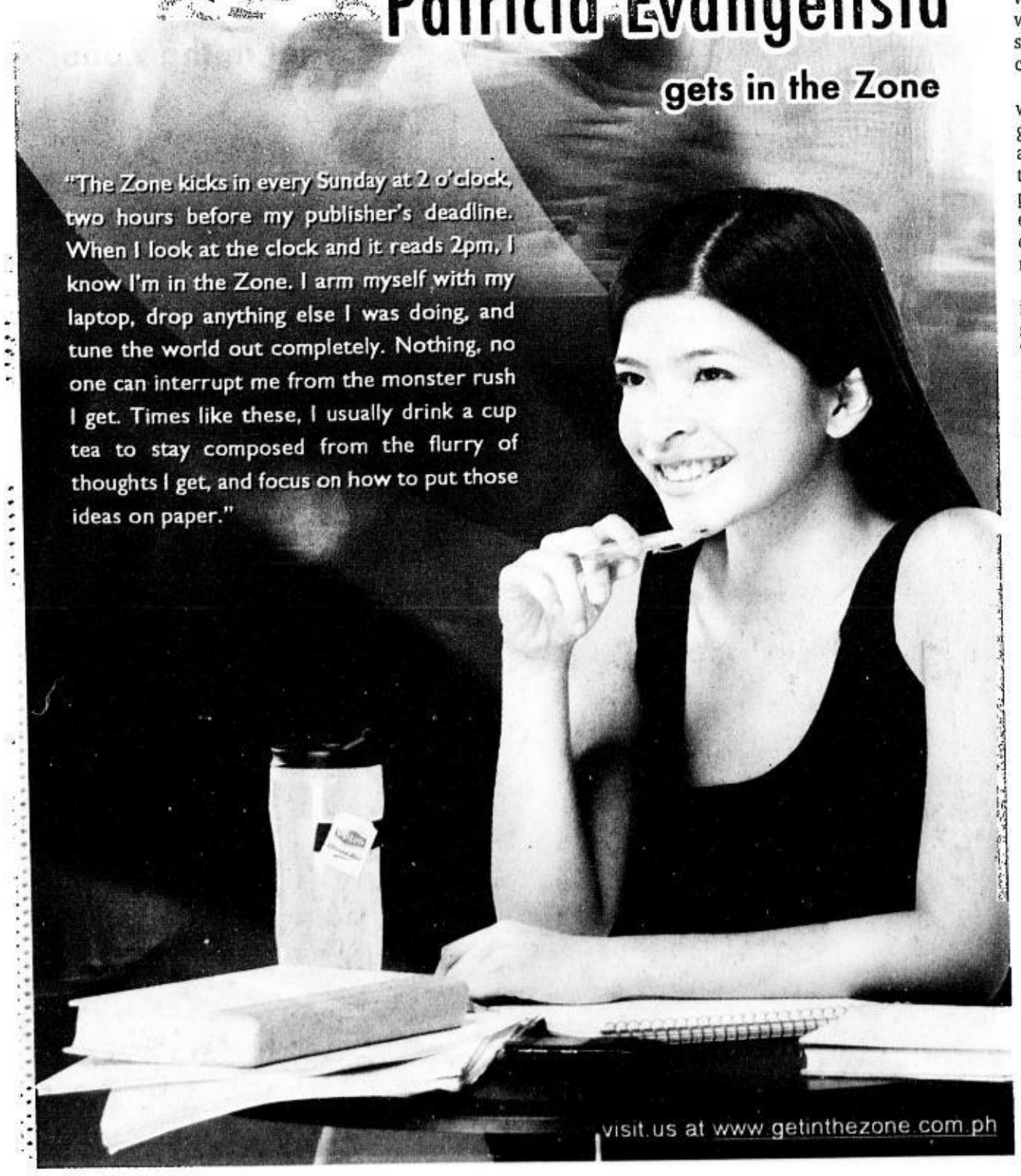
Z Ne

Opinion Leader and Headliner

Patricia Evangelista

gets in the Zone

"The Zone kicks in every Sunday at 2 o'clock, two hours before my publisher's deadline. When I look at the clock and it reads 2pm, I know I'm in the Zone. I arm myself with my laptop, drop anything else I was doing, and tune the world out completely. Nothing, no one can interrupt me from the monster rush I get. Times like these, I usually drink a cup tea to stay composed from the flurry of thoughts I get, and focus on how to put those ideas on paper."



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ONE of the books on the updated required reading list

Plot thickens

By James Gabrillo

"THOSE WHO OBJECT TO THE 'ARTIFICIALITY' ... TELL US to 'look into our hearts and write.' But that is not looking deep enough. One must look into the cerebral cortex, the nervous system, and the digestive tracts."—T. S. Eliot

Save Philippine literature, save the world

I fell in love with Pinoy literature after reading Ibrahim A. Jubaira's short story entitled Blue Blood of the Big Astana, as part of a requirement in freshman Lit class in high school. I'm not exaggerating when I say that reading it for the first time was a gratifying experience for a 14-year-old. Having been exposed only to Goosebumps, Roald Dahl, Hardy Boys and Nintendo generation pop "classics" like The Catcher in the Rye and The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, I never expected that nice treasures were lurking at the Filipiniana sections of bookstores until I read Jubaira's simple, triumphant piece about boyhood amid a Muslim setting.

Later on I explored other texts and of course, I realized that there was no reason to doubt Pinoy lit and its capability to match and sometimes overtake foreign creations in terms of beauty, innovation and significance. Six years ago, I remember bawling like a baby after reading a short story for children in Filipino entitled "Sandosenang Sapatos" written by Palanca knight Luis P. Gatmaitan. Our country's literature has evolved in scores of ways since then.

Not just for the whiz clique

In my head now is the booming buzz over Philippine science fiction. For such a long time, sci-fi has been dismissed lock, stock and barrel to the insubstantial term "pulp fiction." But our local sci-fi "movement" is working like mad to totally wipe out the negative notion attached to the genre. The movement is churning out original and hardcore Filipino sci-fi stories which serve as alternatives to the typical stuff we read. These efforts contribute to the expansion of the sci-fi readership beyond the whiz clique to the more common Pinoy reader.

British historian Robert Conquest once wrote, "For a long time, science fiction was regarded as an outré form of 'mass culture.' It was associated with the sensationalism of its lowest type." Reading through the anthology "Philippine Speculative Fiction," edited by Dean Alfar, enabled me to see first-hand that the "literature of the imagination," as Alfar calls it, is in no way nonprestigious or "low-brow."

The anthology, as a whole, enabled me to imaginatively soar away from the bleak present to the exciting world of the unfamiliar. The tales took me away from the city, towards the suspension of disbelief, towards the enchantment. I was pleased with how most of the stories pulled the carpet I was sitting on, the way they used space well, and the way they flowed with a balance of complexity and irony.

Stickler vs materialistic

Developments such as these should remind us to choose with caution the fiction that we read. See, some writers make it their trade to write whatever it is that is pop, as this equals more revenue. This spells trouble especially with regard to the playing field laid out by a surging subgenre where it would seem that anything with a smack of "otherliness" can score a three-pointer. But really, putting robots, spaceships, monsters and morbidities just for the heck of it does not produce good books. It produces mere ephemera.

However, this dilemma of literature getting entangled in the middle of the stickler desires of high art and the materialistic urgency of being a bestseller has become, at the very least, a bore. Literary pros and stalwarts should instead guide us common Pinoy readers in disentangling not the issue of art versus pop but the back story behind the dilemma. Since this is also a global phenomenon, we should ask, what contributed to the emergence of these ideas in the literary landscape/marketplace?

We all have to learn not just how to distinguish between good and bad fiction, but also to discover that there are gems lurking within a genre, waiting to be seized. Personally, I think it's time to give these writers what they deserve. They should be acknowledged not merely as genre writers, but as brilliant keepers each armed with a gifted imagination.

Lessons from a legend

On a lighter note, one of my most vivid memories from childhood is watching the films of Fernando Poe Jr. every Saturday night on local TV. I'm saying this 'cause I think that Pinoy lit can learn a thing or two from Da King. One of which is that sometimes, a good take-off point is all you need.

There are so many capable writers out there who are buried in the dark corners, only because they don't know how to maneuver themselves in a room that is to a certain extent ruled by the word revenue. Watch FPJ films and you'll notice that whenever someone has done FPJ wrong, there are no court scenes. Because those are boring. *Isinasakamay ni Da King ang batas.* Like the silent spectacle they competently create in their narratives, Pinoy writers should learn how to affirm their right to be read and enjoyed by their countrymen.

Finally, let's make use of lit's power to safeguard our inimitable cultural energy. The only way we can do this is by defending our roots by reading/writing stories which are truly ours. There's nothing wrong with writing big action sequences with cars blowing up, or about teenagers who talk like "Hey dudio your car is whack man let's go play X-Box yo" and they're like thirteen. But then what's Hollywood for?

Let us encourage new subgenres, new writers, new voices. There is no reason to back off if they appear off the scale at first. By allowing them to create new reference points, we are indirectly allowing our lit to grow like never before.

Main characters

SUPER! INTERVIEWED TWO CELEBRATED literary figures, Dean Alfar and Vim Nadera, to aid us in understanding the present state of Pinoy literature.

Dean Alfar

It is an exciting time for Philippine literature, especially with the growth of Speculative Fiction. Writers have begun to produce more and more stories of wonder and imagination and are being taken seriously, unlike in past times.

Before, unless a story was social realist or domestic realist, it would not be published, be looked down upon and be considered not good enough for adult readers. Now, inspired by the fantastic fiction pioneered by the likes of Gregorio Brilliantes, we have fantasy, horror, and science fiction from younger authors—Ian Casocot, Sarge Lacuesta, Luis Katigbak, Yvette Tan, Cyan Abad-Jugo , Andrew Drilon, Vin Simbulan, Kit Kwe, Douglas Candano, Joseph Nacino and more and more each year.

We are reading stories from young people who have a more global appreciation of things, giving them a unique perspective on our own culture. The result is invigorating fiction that pushes at the boundaries.

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SATURDAY Special

Editor Nestor U. Torre • Assistant Editor Rito P. Asilo

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"KADIN'S" young protagonists look for their missing goat through the crags and chasms of Batanes.

Prospects of Cinemalaya entries assessed

By Nestor U/ Torre

ON JULY 20, ALL ROADS FOR MOVIE BUFFS will lead to the CCP, where the third Cinemalaya alternative film festival will unreel (until July 29). Nine digital feature films and 10 short features will be screened, introducing new filmmakers to a growing audience of film lovers who are looking for the range, variety and depth in viewing options that local mainstream cinema generally fails to provide.

Which specific movies should you make a beeline for? It all depends on what you're looking for, of course, but given a level playing field in terms of preferences and expectations, here's a handy guide:

Screenplays

We were among those who chose the finalist screenplays for production, so we have more than an inkling of what the finished films could shape up to be:

"Endo" by Jade Castro and Michiko Yamamoto was one of the submitted storylines we helped convince other jurors to consider for inclusion, because we found it tragically relevant to the lives of millions of young Filipino workers today.

It's about the "end contract" syndrome by which coldly pragmatic employers keep their costs low by hiring young workers for only six months at a time. This abridges their psychological view of life something terrible, and the stultifying reality fully deserves to be dramatized and exposed on the big screen.

We were also taken by Adolf Alix Jr.'s **"Kadin,"** because it set its "purely simple" story of a boy looking for his lost goat in the pristinely awesome island group of the Batanes.

We knew, of course, that there was a risk that the film's utter simplicity could make the production a bore, but we hoped that Alix was fully aware of this possibility, and knew how to obviate it.

Testament

On the plus side, we sensed that, if the film "worked," it could become a great testament, not just to the brute beauty and power of untrammeled nature, but also to the hardy survivors who lived so close to its wrath and majesty.

"Gulong," by Socorro Fernandez and Jeanne Lim, could be the most inspiring movie in the film fest. It's another intentionally simple tale about a boy who works hard to earn enough money to buy a bicycle, only to periodically give away his earnings to a number of needy people.

The fact that child actors pretty much have to "carry" the movie on their frail shoulders could compromise the movie's chances for success. But again, we trust that the filmmakers are savvy enough to avoid this pitfall.

Emilio Abello IV's **"Ligaw Liham"** is a fey, deft and evanescent tale of how letters, both found and lost, can affect the ebb and flow of people's lives.

Aureus Solito's **"Pisay"** is another story we pushed, because it's about some students at the Philippine Science High School in the turbulent '80s—and for a big change, it presents Filipino teenagers as brilliant, unlike most local teen flicks that depict them as goodlooking idiots.

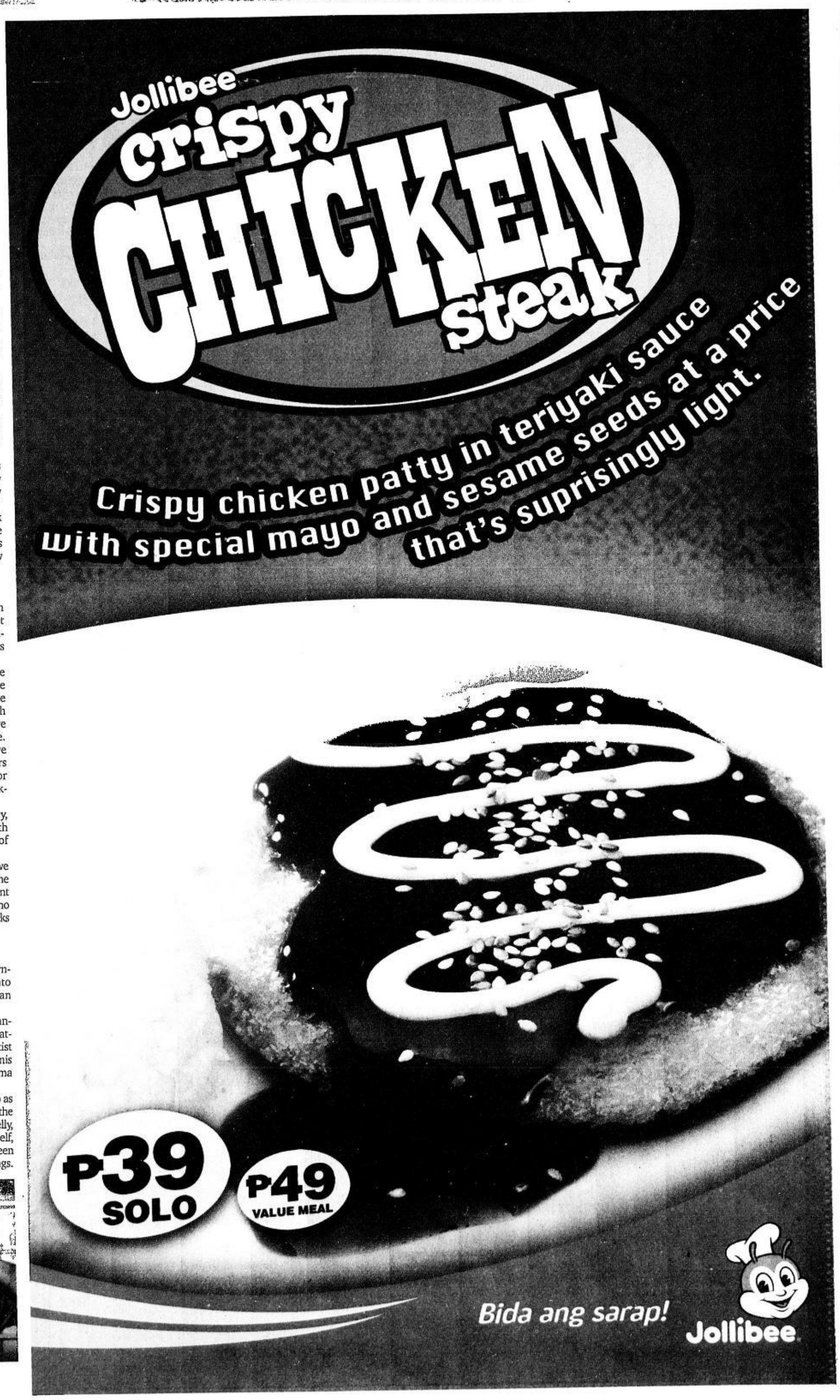
Potential drawback

The project's potential drawback is its "syndrome" format, which is difficult to whip into focused shape, but we hope that Solito can pull it off.

Ed Lejano's **"Sinungaling na Buwan"** is another complex film with great possibilities. Katrina Flores' **"Still Life"** is about a great artist confounded by life's tragic limitations. Dennis Marasigan's **"Tukso"** is a seething erotic drama that plumbs the depths of human sensuality.

As for Jim Libiran's **"Tribu,"** it *could* end up as the festival's sleeper sensation. It crawls into the urban jungle's fetid and dangerous underbelly, where death is as cheap and casual as life itself, and, for the first time, exposes on the big screen the short and shattered lives of teen street gangs.

SOLIMAN Cruz in Dennis Marasigan's "Tukso."



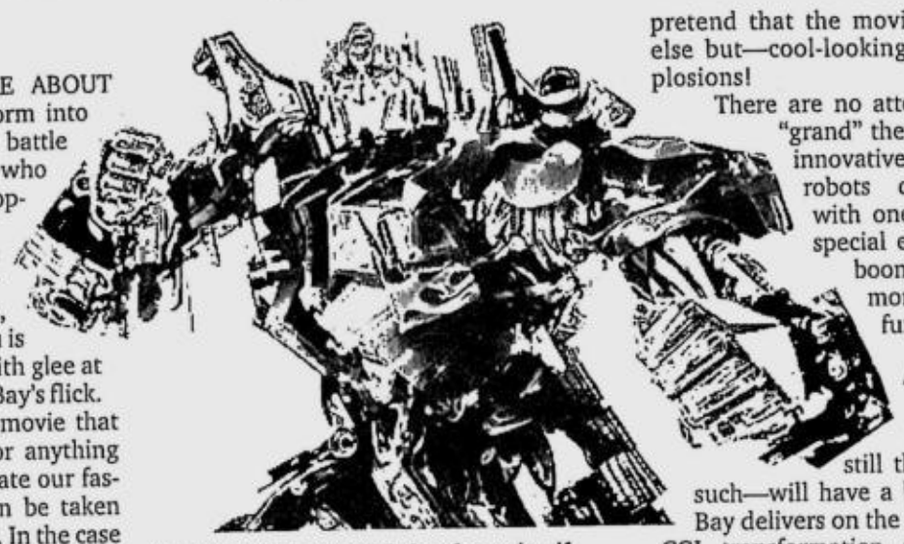
Smooth special effects, self-deprecating humor in Bay's latest actioner

By Noelani Torre

THERE'S A MOVIE OUT THERE ABOUT gigantic, alien robots that transform into 18-wheelers and Camaros and do battle with other gigantic alien robots who transform into jets, tanks and choppers.

If you spent your childhood's Saturday mornings waiting for Optimus Prime to say "Autobots, transform!" the little kid inside you is probably jumping up and down with glee at the prospect of watching Michael Bay's flick.

Clearly, "Transformers" isn't a movie that examines the human condition or anything like that—except maybe to illustrate our fascination with machinery that can be taken apart and put back together again. In the case of the Autobots (the good guys) and the Decepticons (the bad guys), they do something even cooler—they transform into completely different machines!



"TRANSFORMERS." Pokes fun at itself.

Toys

You can probably see why kids thought they were such great toys when Hasbro first launched the Transformers line back in 1984. Since then, the Transformers have starred in comic books, cartoons and videogames.

The newly released movie isn't the first one, though. There was a cartoon flick back in '86, though it wasn't that big a hit. The Michael Bay-directed live action, CGI-enhanced version, on the other hand, is well on its way toward becoming one—if it isn't already.

In his latest film, Bay, who helmed "Armageddon" and "Pearl Harbor," once more reveals his love for explosions and cool-looking machinery. Thankfully, he doesn't pretend that the movie is about anything else but—cool-looking machinery and explosions!

There are no attempts at exploring a "grand" theme, or at creating an innovative plot: There are robots clashing metallically with one another, impressive special effects, things that go boom—and dashes of humor that sometimes poke fun at the film itself!

Action

Eight-year-old kids—and those who still think of themselves as such—will have a blast with this movie. Bay delivers on the action, and the robots' CGI transformation processes are super-smooth.

The actors play their roles straightforwardly—Shia LaBeouf is engaging as the earnest, un-cool Sam Witwicky, and Megan Fox (as Mikaela Banes) is no fainting female.

In the end, even if you notice that, yes, the movie is actually pretty silly, you'll still enjoy it. It's not "there's more than meets the eye," it's "what you see is what you get"—and, sometimes, that's just fine!

ALAJAR, AMADOR AND DE LEON. Together again after five years.

Gina, Pinky, Angelu reunite in Hong Kong run of 'TVM'

By Rito P. Asilo

IT'S BEEN FIVE YEARS SINCE Gina Alajar, Pinky Amador and Angelu de Leon first graced the Filipino version of Eve Ensler's "The Vagina Monologues." In 2002, the talented trio starred in New Voice's controversial hit play opposite Angel Aquino, Belinda Panelo and Sheila Francisco, who performed the monologues in English.

Tomorrow, two performances of "TVM in Filipino" will be staged at the Concert Hall of the City Hall in Hong Kong, back to back with the Cantonese version of the play. Eric Quizon, who arranged the Hong Kong tour while he was taping episodes of GMA's "Asian Treasures" in China, is line producing for Springtime Productions.

Key Asian cities

After it premiered in Manila in 2000, "TVM" has since been staged in key Asian cities—twice in Japan (in English and Japanese), and five times each in Hong Kong and Singapore.

More than critical acclaim and commercial success, NVC is more grateful for the chance to showcase world-class Filipino talent to our Asian neighbors in a play that tackles female empowerment and other issues concerning the "fairer" sex.

Previous incarnations of the play in those cosmopolitan cities were patronized mostly by expats, so we were pleased to learn from Eric that tickets to the Hong Kong performances are also moving briskly.

Controversy

At rehearsals, Gina, Pinky and Angelu fondly recalled the controversy that surrounded the 2002 staging. One day before opening night, they stayed up till 2 a.m. to rehearse the newly translated monologues. (Gina and company have since added more thespic flavor and gravitas to their respective monologues.) Happily, that particular "TVM" run remains one of NVC's biggest hits!

Six years after its first Manila staging, the Filipino version is still controversial: Early this year, a top university, known for its liberal stand on socio-political issues, finally allowed the play to be performed on its campus—but only in English!

But, the reason why NVC chose to adapt the play in the vernacular was because it wanted to bring the issue of domestic violence and abuse closer to home. The production doesn't merely entertain, it dares women to end the pervasive culture of silence.

THEY WRITE THE SCRIPTS

Gina Marissa Tagasa writes from the heart

By Ronald G. Mangubat

WRITER GINA MARISSA TAGASA WROTE HER first script at age 12 and since then, has not stopped inventing stories that touch the heart.

Stories

For more than a decade, she had been the sole writer of the late Helen Vela's popular soap, "Lovingly Yours, Helen." Today, at 51, Tagasa can easily whip up stories for radio, TV or film.

She tells us: "Producers would call me at eight in the evening and demand that I deliver a script in less than eight hours, because they would shoot in the morning. *Mabilisan talaga!*"

TAGASA. Wrote her first script at age 12.

How does she do it? She says with humility: "I'm a 'deadline' writer. I thrive on stress. I am more productive that way. Mario O'Hara and the late Orlando Nadres were my mentors."

These days, Tagasa's writing schedule is still full. She is the head-writer of several GMA shows like "Lola Basyang," "Tasya Pantasya," "Magic Kamison," and "Bahay Mo Ba 'To?" "Angels" is still showing in cineplexes.

Tagasa reveals that writing for TV soaps isn't all that easy. She realizes that reading her fellow writers' works also helped improve her craft. She admires the work of Roy Iglesias, Ricky Lee, Bing Lao and Joey Reyes. She explains: "Roy is a brilliant writer. *Kahit anong* material, *kaya niya.* I love Ricky's sensitivity. And I love the crisp and witty dialogue of Bing and Joey!"

Through the years, reading, watching movies, interacting with friends—even going to malls—became Tagasa's sources of ideas from which she mines her stories and characters. Whenever she's in a dry spell, she goes malling or watches a boring film, so she can psyche herself up and say, "I can do better than this writer!"

Observation

In Gina's observation, soaps today are more visual compared to the days when she was still a struggling writer. Another lesson that she remembers comes from the late Lino Brocka, who constantly reminded her to write "to express, *not* to impress." She elaborates: "There are writers who write to please their directors. In the process, they lose the heart of the matter!"

AT THE CINEMAS

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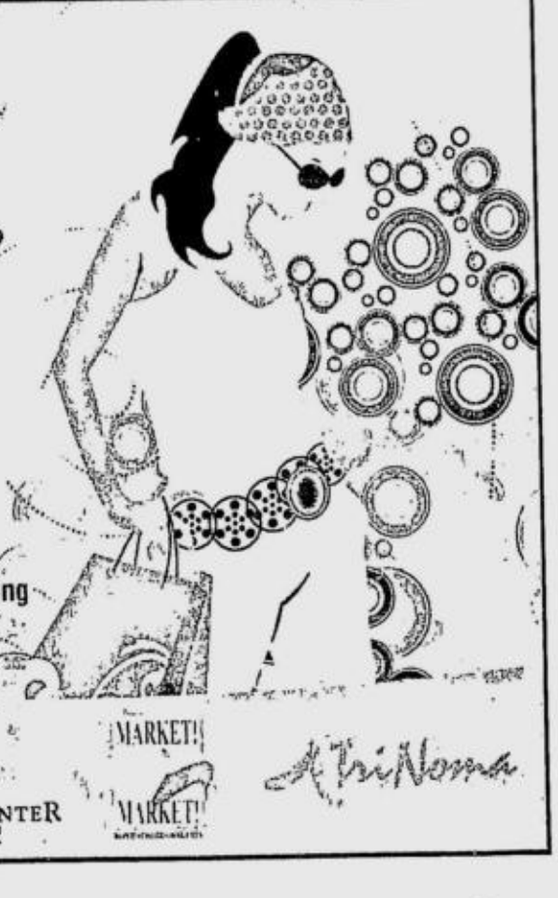

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Barbara Perez makes auspicious comeback in Fernandez's 'Gulong'

By Edmund L. Sicam

AFTER A FOUR-YEAR ABSENCE FROM the show business, Barbara Perez is back on the big screen—but with a difference. The actress' comeback vehicle is an indie movie, "Gulong," one of nine finalists in the 2007 Cinemalaya Independent Film Festival.

Initially, the veteran actress didn't want to accept the assignment. "I didn't think much of indie films," she confesses. "I was worried about the technical limitations of digital filmmaking. I still preferred the old way of making films." However, she changed her mind when she read the script written by Jeanne Lim ("*Maganda ang istorya, hindi* forcing-through").

Sockie Fernandez, a seasoned director of TV commercials, had first sought out Barbara's daughter, who is herself a respected director in advertising. It was she who convinced her mom that she would be in good hands. That clinched it for Barbara.

Obsessive-compulsive

Perez, who admits that she's obsessive-compulsive, had only two hours of sleep when she drove to Pila, Laguna for her first shooting day and got there an hour before call time. It took five takes to finish her first scene, but that was because Sockie wanted to perfect her sequence with the child actors.

She would take several more trips to the provincial location with hubby Robert Arevalo, who's also in the cast. Each time, she would come an hour early, do her own make-up, and rehearse her lines. Last Monday, she watched a preview of "Gulong" and was pleased with how the movie turned out.

In much the same way, she says she did not regret turning her back on international stardom way back in 1962. While many local actors today dream of making it in Hollywood but got nowhere despite their best efforts, agents were knocking at her door to represent her in Tinseltown. This, after she came out in the movie, "No Man Is an Island," with Jeffrey Hunter.

Barbara, who was then a contract star of Sampaguita Pictures, was chosen by US producers to appear in the Hollywood movie shot in the Philippines. When the film was completed, Barbara was invited to the US to promote the project. "*Na*-culture shock *ako*!," she recalls. "*Para akong* little girl. I got scared!"

She was billeted in the producer's mansion, which was once owned by the legendary Greta Garbo. Everyday, she would be fetched by a car driven by a uniformed chauffeur and taken to the studio, where she would be photographed for publicity purposes. When she examined the prints, she would be surprised at how thin she looked in some of the shots. She found out later that in some cases, they would superimpose her face on the bodies of other actresses. That early, they were already doctoring photographs!

Movie fan

Barbara was a big movie fan, and she was thrilled to sit across Sandra Dee and Vera Miles in the make-up room. Once, she was having lunch in the commissary when she was approached by Cary Grant, who asked if he could join her. She got so rattled that she started to smoke. The actor lectured her, "You shouldn't be smoking!"

After the premiere of her movie, a film executive offered her a role in another movie. She would play a Mexican girl who has to work in a honkytonk bar to earn a living. When she learned that the role called for her to wear sexy costumes and involved kissing scenes, she turned it down. The executive, however, told her that if she expected to work in Hollywood, she would have to deal with similar situations.

Barbara started to assess the situation. "My roles would be limited. I would have to compete with other Asian stars. How could I compete with Nancy Kwan, who could dance? I didn't dance!," she explains. There was another pressing reason why she was having second thoughts about signing a Hollywood contract: "Robert (Arevalo) was pestering me to marry him. So, I decided I might as well go for a lifetime contract!" So, Barbara left Hollywood to resume her career in the Philippines and become Mrs. Robert Arevalo.

By this time, her contract with Sampaguita had expired and she decided to become an independent actress. Barbara was then able to work with Fernando Poe Jr. and Joseph Estrada.

Two icons

What was it like working with the two icons? "They were both very *maasikaso. Nung nakatrabaho ko si* Joseph *sa* 'Ito Ang Pilipino,' *ang init-init ng* costume, *kaya may taga-pay-pay ako. Si* FPJ *naman, nakatrabaho ko sa* 'Manandata.' First day *ko sa* set, *nagbukas siya ng* champagne."

She remembers her first day of shooting with FPJ. She was fresh from her role in "No Man Is an Island," and she was nervous about working with the action king. "*Si* Ronnie, *nakaupo sa* dolly, *talagang binabantayan ako. Ayun, nagkamali tuloy ako sa* lines *ko. Hiyang-hiya ako!*"

It's interesting to note that Barbara has worked with her husband in only one movie before "Gulong." This was the acclaimed "Daigdig ng Mga Api" (1965), which was directed by National Artist Gerry de Leon. Barbara and Robert both won acting awards from Famas.

Barbara remembers doing a love scene with Robert. The script only called for them to embrace, but they got carried away—and the embrace progressed into a passionate kissing scene!

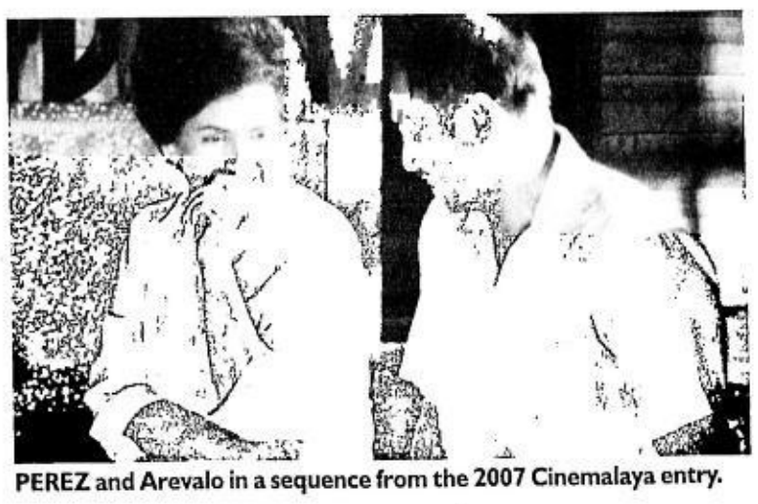
On another occasion, Robert had a long monologue wherein he was trying to rouse the farmers to take action. He asked the person in charge of shooting schedules not to give Barbara a call slip on the same day.

Solo scenes

Arevalo knew that the actress would find something to criticize in his acting. In the same manner, when Perez shot her solo scenes, she made sure her husband was not around. They are each other's worst critics, Barbara admits, she more than he.

In "Gulong," Barbara and Robert play a couple whose love is rekindled after many years by a child's quest for a bicycle. Also in the cast are Gary Valenciano, Gardo Verzosa, Ina Feleo, Lou Veloso, Odette Khan, Tricia Amper-Jimenez, Sheila Francisco, and child actors Steven Fermo, Jorge Concordia, David Medina and Ignacius Flores.

"Gulong" will have a gala screening on July 22 at 12:45 p.m. at the CCP Main Theater.



PEREZ and Arevalo in a sequence from the 2007 Cinemalaya entry.

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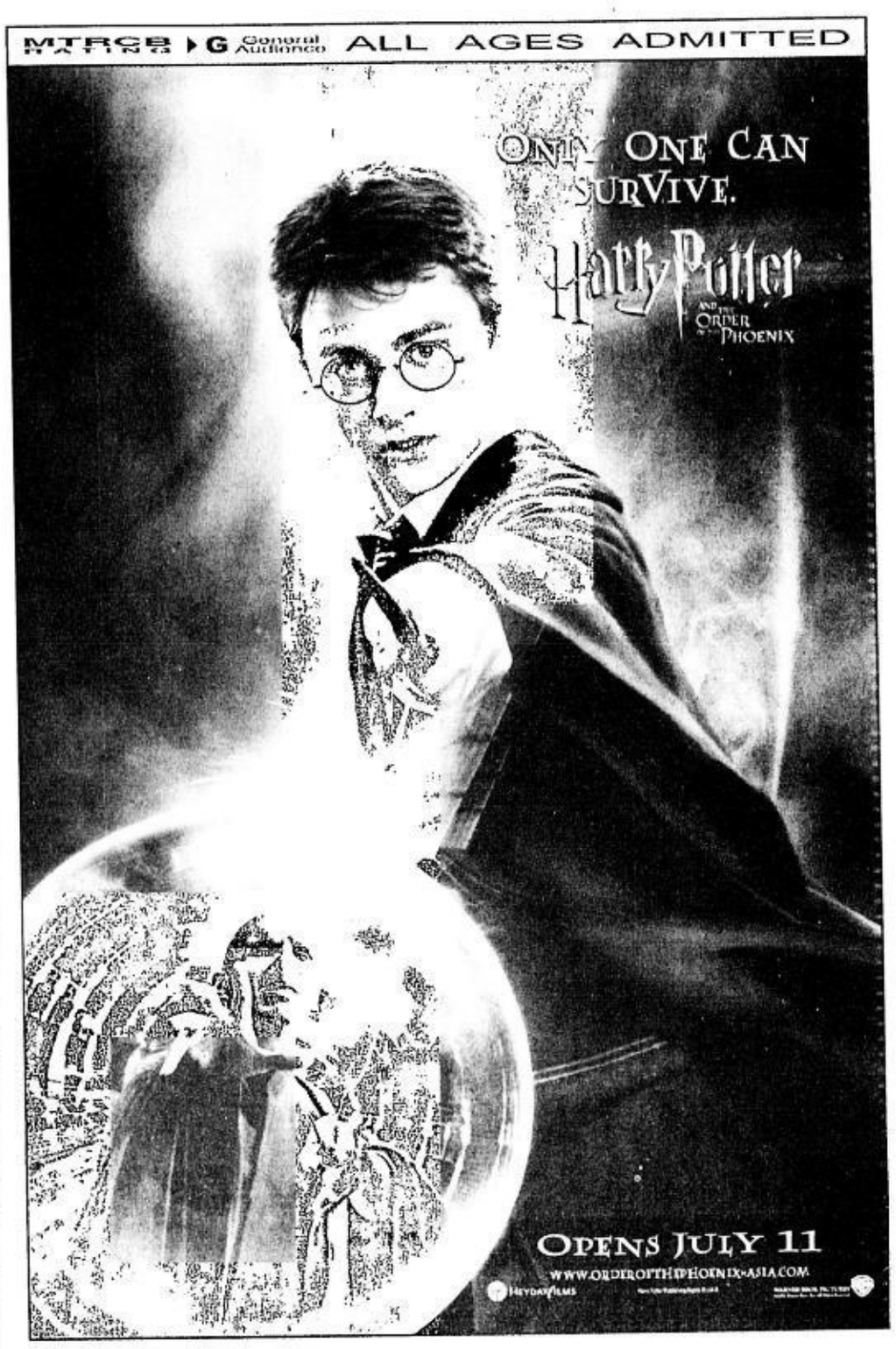
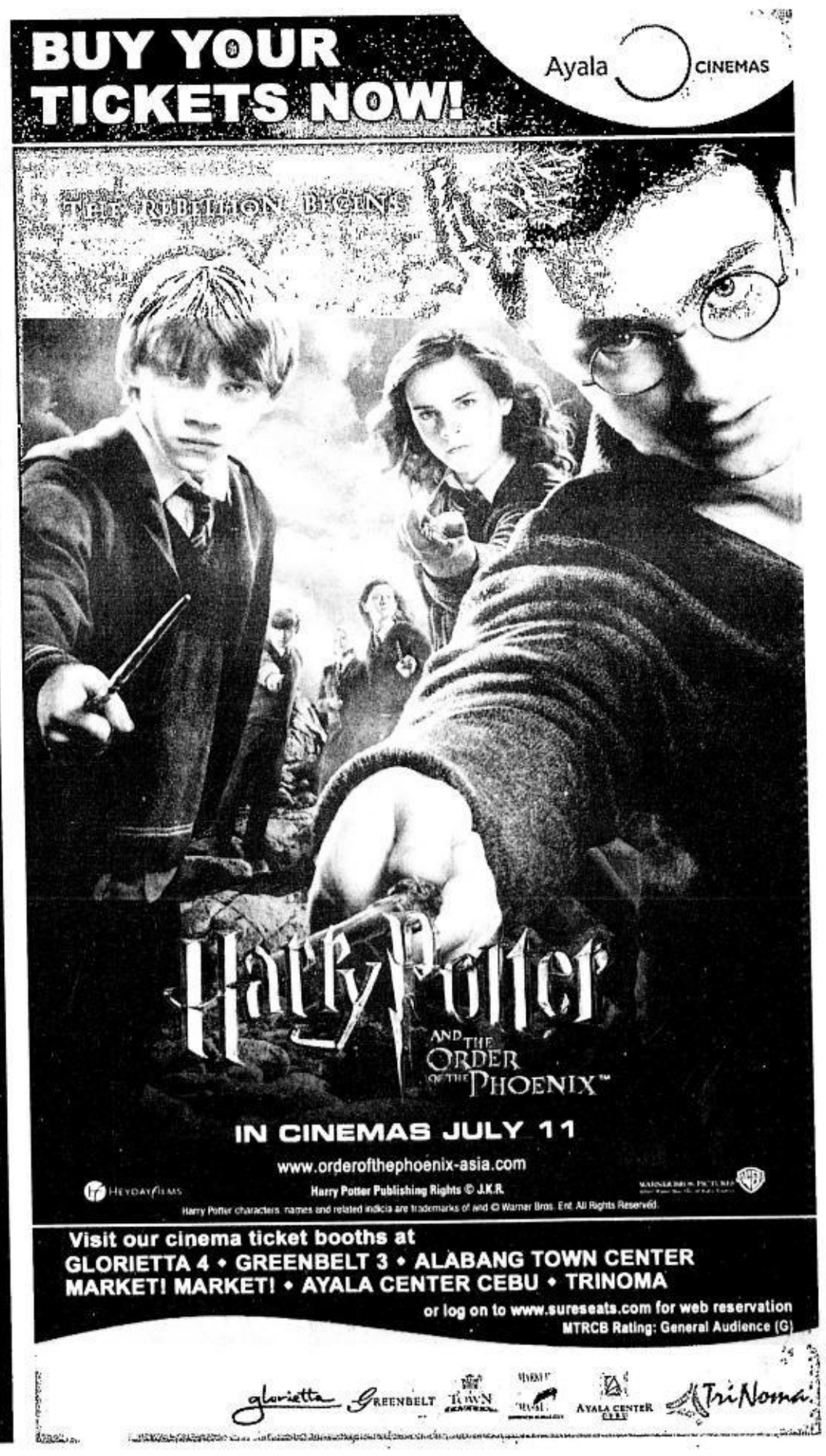




Remembering the legacy of Hermogenes Ylagan

By Behn Cervantes

HERMOGENES YLAGAN IS OFten referred to by cultural historians as the "Father of Philippine Zarzuela." The theatrical form became popular in the country after it was imported from Spain *via* Mexico.

Not long after it was introduced here, *zarzuela* troupes flourished all over the country. In Iloilo, a dramatist named Damaso etched a name for himself among the Ilonggos. Cultural centers like Pampanga, Ilocos and Bulacan likewise had thriving performing groups that staged shows during religious and national holidays. Then came Atang de la Rama, Philippine entertainment's first superstar.

ILAGAN. Accomplished actor.

Most active

One of Manila's theater troupes was led by Hermogenenes Ylagan. Since he was most active at the start of the 20th century, the dramatist-actor-musician had to contend with the entry of cinema.

His talented children were quickly hired for the new medium to captivate the moviegoing audience, since they possessed good looks and musical talent, and were educated.

However, even if the Ylagan name was highly esteemed among local performing artists, his sons opted to use other professional monickers to establish their own worth and identity:

A doctor son chose the professional name Gerry de Leon. The filmmaker not only directed with distinction, he was also an expert editor.

Gerry's daughter, Liberty Ilagan, is the lissome *mestiza* who was among the teenage beauties of Sampaguita during its Golden Years in the mid-'50s. Janno Gibbs is Liberty's nephew and the son of Ronaldo Valdez.

GIBBS. Distinguished roots.

Gerry's brother, Angel Esmeralda, became one of the most popular matinee idols of the '30s.

Angel's son, Jay Ilagan, by pre-war star, Corazon Noble, is still remembered as an excellent thespian.

Tito Arevalo turned to making music ("Minamahal, Sinasamba") for the movies. His son, Robert, himself an acclaimed actor and film director, remains active to this day.

Striking omissions in best actors list

By Nestor U. Torre

FIFTEEN MALE THESPIANS HAVE BEEN CITED by a 100-member panel as the best Filipino actors of all time, and we've been asked to react to the choices.

Well, let's see: The 15 best actors are Vic Silayan, Dindo Fernando, Jay Ilagan, Dolphy, Cesar Montano, Christopher de Leon, Aga Muhlach, Eddie Garcia, Phillip Salvador, Michael de Mesa, Piolo Pascual, Johnny Delgado, Richard Gomez, Mark Gil and Bembol Roco.

First off, they should be cited as the panel's choices as the best *film* actors of all time.

Truth to tell, we have had stage actors who've done even better thespic work than some of the 15 men on the list.

Even after limiting the scope to movie actors, however, the list isn't definitive. These are some names who shouldn't be on it, and other acting greats who aren't on the list.

Comments

Let's focus our comments on the film actors who *should* be on the list. Very definitely, Ruben Rustia deserves to be cited as one of the best. In an impressively wide range of movie roles, he created textured characters of great subtlety and emotive power.

Tony Santos Sr. is another definite "should include." As his lead roles in film classics like "Biyaya ng Lupa," "Anak Dalita" and "Badjao" proved, he was vastly credible and empathetic in "everyman" roles that contrasted radically with the "*tisoy* syndrome" that ruled the Filipino movie industry's star system from the '30s to the '60s.

In the same vein, how could we possibly leave out Jose Padilla Jr., who was known for his larger-than-life portrayals in movies like "Sawa sa Lumang Simboryo?"

Ditto for Van de Leon, who delivered powerful performances in "Roberta," "Taga sa Bato," and "Kamandag." He won the Famas best actor trophy twice, and even in supporting character roles, he stood out because of the intensity and raw realism of his performances.

Let's not forget Pancho Magalona, whose compelling performance in "Hanggang sa Dulo ng Daigdig" was truly memorable. He was also cited by some US critics for his gritty portrayal of a downed Korean pilot in a Hollywood film.

Similarly an outstanding thespian was Vic Vargas, whose versatility in the course of a long and varied career was impressive to behold. From action films to sex comedies, he could do them all to a fine turn!

We must also mention Ronaldo Valdez, whose own depth and range is exceptional. Some people may dismiss him as "just" a character or sitcom actor, but he's really much more than that. Aside from his dramatic roles, we admire his truly witty gay characterizations on film, which benefit from his exquisite sense of comic timing.

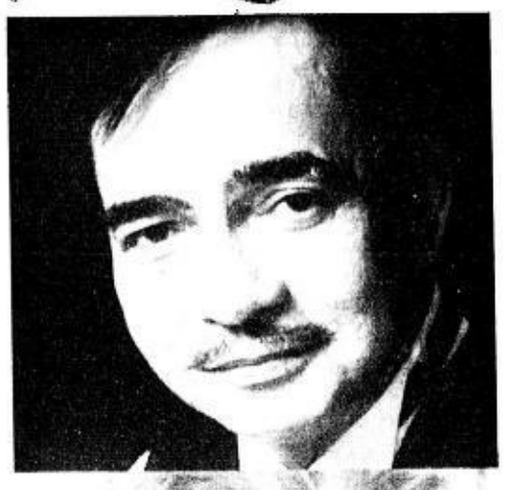
It really is too bad that all that talent is being put to use mostly in undemanding cameo roles on TV—but then, Valdez isn't the only competent thespian who's being taken for granted by the entertainment industry these days.

In addition, we must also cite the power and versatility in the film roles essayed by Manuel Conde, Oscar Roncal, Tommy Abuel, Leopoldo Salcedo, Joel Torre, Ricky Davao and Nonie Buencamino.

So, why didn't some of them get on the list of 15 best film actors? Partly because many of their movies are no longer available for viewing and reviewing. That's a big tragedy that we continue to ignore—to our great loss.

Instead of coming up with lists, therefore, can't we instead focus our energies on helping improve the miserable film archiving and restoration system of the Filipino movie industry?

What good are great actors if their work can no longer move, benefit, and inspire succeeding generations of film lovers?



(FROM TOP) RUSTIA, ABUEL AND VALDEZ. Exceptional depth and range.

The other side of Mark Jimenez

STREET SMART

Mandy Navasero

MARIO CRESPO IS MORE POPULARLY known as Mark Jimenez, a former congressman and high-powered businessman. But, up close, the beleaguered father and husband, whom we have been reading a lot about, isn't so bad, after all.

He has an intelligence quotient of 188. At the Spiral coffee shop, a group of media women chatted with MJ. He talked with confidence and charm.

Spirituality

MJ said he found God when he was 4 years old. For many years, he volunteered as a *sakristan* in a church in Paco, where he grew up. His spirituality has brought him to depressed areas to sponsor baptismal rites. His goal is 50,000 baptisms, and he has 35,000 more to attend to.

JIMENEZ. Found peace in prison.

He says he found peace while serving his prison term in Allenwood, Pennsylvania.

Upon releas, MJ came home to Manila and visited the Monastery of Transfiguration in Malaybalay, Bukidnon. Thereafter, he embarked on a long journey to help people who are in need.

He has spent over P700 million of his own money to share relief goods, food, medicine, construction materials, rosaries, Divine Mercy posters, and financial assistance to impoverished communities in Manila, Luzon, Bicol, Romblon, Palawan, Cebu and Davao. No politics was involved!

E-mail mandynavasero@yahoo.com, or call 8991767.

A leader worth emulating

LOTUS POND

R. Valencia and S. Bismark

ONCE UPON A TIME, THERE WAS A WONDERful king who was wise and full of great qualities. At his enthronement, he was praised by the people but he did not readily accept their compliments.

Being newly crowned, he felt it was inappropriate that great attributes were heaped upon him even *before* those qualities became manifest. He did not want his followers to have too many expectations of him, and regarded their effusive praise as an insult.

The king declared, "O gentle followers, offer those prayers only after the qualities you have spoken about have already manifested themselves in me.

Actions

"A foolish person who accepts effusive praise does not know that it only serves to insult him. A person with honor and magnanimity doesn't like hearing about his abominable actions."

Followers who were also prophets continued to speak of the king's future work: "Just as the sun-god evaporates water for eight months and returns it back to earth in the form of rain, the king collects tax from his subjects and returns it to them in times of need."

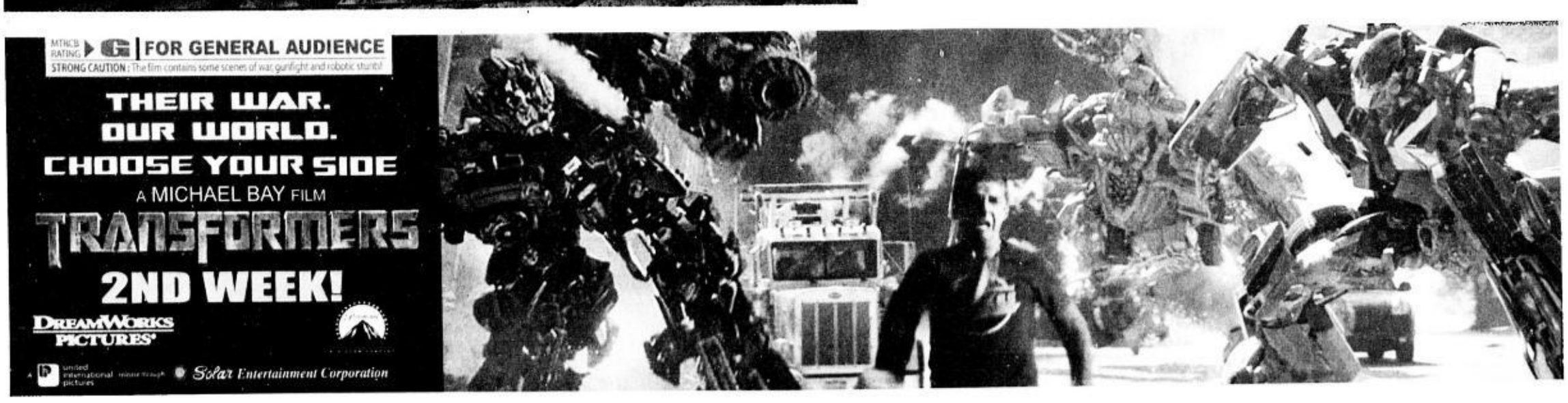
This statement explains the use of tax money for the people's well-being. It shouldn't be used for the personal gratification of government officials.

The king's followers added: "He will remain neutral regarding matters of glorification and vilification. He'll be like air—the life force within the body—which is exhibited internally and externally.

Punishment

"Since the king remains on the path of piety, he will be neutral to both his son and the son of his enemy. If the enemy doesn't deserve punishment, he won't punish him. But, if his own son needs to be punished, he will immediately give him the punishment he deserves. Because of this, his subjects will derive great satisfaction in accepting him as their ruler."

We should see the king's qualities in our government officials—they should be humble, honest and neutral.



SATURDAY *Special*

TRAVOLTA (LEFT). Plays a woman in "Hairspray." At right is great find Nikki Blonsky, who portrays his character's daughter.

John Travolta on the joys and 'hazards' of being a woman

LOS ANGELES—"EVerybody tried to grope me all day!"

That was how a smiling John Travolta described his days as a woman—with "big breasts, big ass, and a little waist like Sophia Loren—if she gained 200 pounds"—on the set of the musical-comedy, "Hairspray."

Travolta, who showed up at the presscon minus the body suit, talked about playing Edna Turnblad, the shirt-ironing 1960s *hausfrau* whose daughter, Tracy, lands a spot on a TV dance show. Then, she wins the heart of a dreamboat and manages to break racial segregation in the movie adaptation of the hit Broadway musical.

"Men and women wanted to feel my breasts and bum," John shared. The actor has always been a genial interview subject, but more so on the afternoon of the interview, when the main topic was about him playing a wife (to Christopher Walken) and mother (to Nikki Blonsky, a great find). Reporters laughed through most of the interview.

ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD

Ruben V. Nepales

Attraction

"Breasts and buns were the attraction of the day," the 53-year-old star continued. "I thought: Don't they know that I'm under here? I must be a slut because I didn't care. I would say, 'All right, go ahead!'"

We witnessed John's transformation from a man into a flirtatious woman when we visited the "Hairspray" set in Toronto late last year. The actor talked to us first in regular clothes. Then, several hours later, he emerged in a dazzling red and gold dress for the film's finale.

When we watched the finished product in LA last month, we remembered the details of shooting that final sequence, when the results of "Miss Teenage Hairspray" was announced in an "American Bandstand"-style TV show: The applause of cast and crew after Christopher's last take (John had to stay because he had several more scenes to do); Queen Latifah watching on the sidelines; Michelle Pfeiffer, who has not done a movie in years, declaring that it felt good to be back in a studio, and seeing the spunk and charm of Nikki.

Prosthetics

John discussed what prosthetics can do: "Breasts and their shape signify power. Trust me *(laughter)*. You can walk into a room as a man and not get a reaction. But, you come in as a woman, you get a lot! Men were flirting with me! On the set, I was being given power that I never had before. People had manners in front of me. It was fascinating!"

Since he himself had been subjected to criticism when he gained weight in the past, John was asked about body image and people's obsession with it.

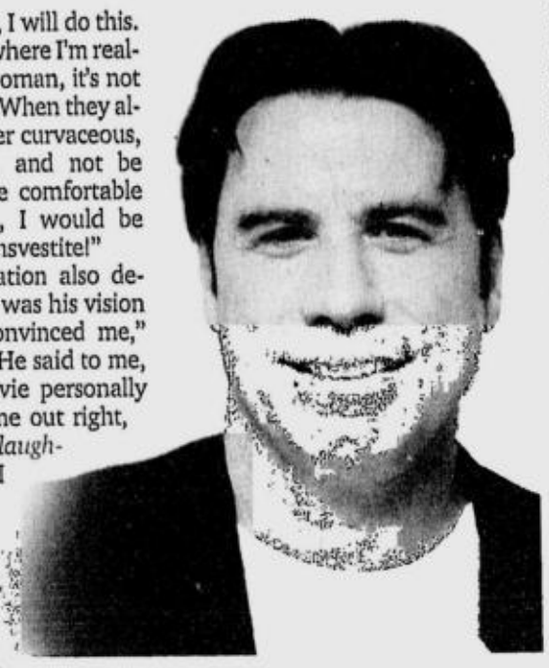
"I've never been particularly judgmental over people's bodies—slim or heavy," he replied. "It never mattered to me, so when I'm criticized, I take it with a grain of salt. I had a passion for food, and I didn't care if I gained some for this and lost some for that."

Transvestite

In this role, first played by the late transvestite, Divine, in John Waters' feature film, and then by Harvey Fierstein (for which he won a Tony Award) and Bruce Vilanch in the Broadway musical inspired by that movie, John recalled, "When I was asked to do it, I said, 'Gee, I was a leading man for 32 years. Why me? What have I done to convince you (the director, Adam Shankman, and producers, Craig Zadan and Neil Meron) that I would be *the* perfect woman?'

"I won't play gay. I said, 'If you let me play a woman, I will do this. If you want the joke where I'm really a man playing a woman, it's not as interesting to me.' When they allowed me to make her curvaceous, soften her features, and not be man-like, I got more comfortable doing it. Otherwise, I would be playing a fag or a transvestite!"

Adam's determination also decided it for John. "It was his vision and passion that convinced me," the actor revealed. "He said to me, 'I will take this movie personally and if it doesn't come out right, I'm going to die *(laughter)*.' I thought, 'I have to go with this guy!' He was passionate about the material. It was important to me because musicals don't work unless every throttle is on full. I was in the biggest musical film in history ('Grease'). To get me back in a musical, and to get me back into the frying pan—excuse my pun—it took a lot of grease *(laughter)*!"



THE ACTOR plays wife to Christopher Walken.

'It took a lot of grease to get me back in a musical'

Magical moment

A scene showing Walken and Travolta singing and dancing *a la* Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers is worth the price of a movie ticket. John's eyes lit up brighter than usual when he discussed this magical moment: "Chris and I are old hoofers from Broadway. We have our history of summer theater, Broadway and off-Broadway. We were comfortable together being musical performers. When Chris decided that he was playing his character as a husband who was crazy about me, that we had a wild sex life *(laughter)*, I said, 'Okay.'

"It was important for me to be coy, feminine, and flirtatious with him. If he weren't crazy about me as a woman who's size 60, it wouldn't work. Chris was pivotal in giving me something I could react to."

A question on whether he had a hard time adjusting as a woman being led by Christopher while dancing led to memories of a moment at the White House that was much photographed. It's one of the iconic images in Travolta's life.

Footage

"To be honest, I did have to adjust to being led," he began. "I remembered Princess Diana because there was footage of her leading Prince Charles. I would see her lead him. So, when I danced with her at the White House, I remember gently forcing her arm down, looking at her in the eye and saying, 'We're good.' When I tried to dominate Chris, I realized, 'Okay, now, I'm Princess Diana and he's John Travolta—I better let him lead. The reversal of role was interesting.

"Dancing with Princess Diana was an amazing moment for her and for me, because I was then having a dip in my career—no one was interested in me! After that, I was reborn. I mattered to people again. I was again on the cover of newspapers and magazines!"

He disclosed that the dance scenes in "Hairspray" were heavily rehearsed. "When it was just my own body and clothes, it was hard work," John explained. "But, it was fun and challenging when I put the body suit on. The trick was to look lighter than I was. I didn't want to worry the moviegoer by moving heavily.

Body suit

"I wanted to be light on my feet, since this was a musical-comedy. Fortunately, the body suit was tight to my body, so if I moved my hips, even though they were large, they moved at the same time. If there had been a lag or separation, it wouldn't have worked!

"As a child, I had the advantage of watching some of the best female performers onstage in New York. In my memory, I knew how to make a dance step go from masculine to feminine. Sometimes, it involved arching a wrist or moving your hips."

This is a story John likes to tell: "When I was a kid, I watched my mother struggle to put on girdles, bras and stockings. She would walk in high heels for hours. I thought, well, there must be some level of discomfort there, but when she put it all together, she looked pretty good.

"But, when I had to do it myself, it was exhausting! I would be out of breath trying to put the girdle and stockings on. I said, where have I seen this before? Oh, my mother *(laughter)*!"

Parental approval

Since a crucial story element in "Hairspray" involves the teenage characters seeking parental approval to follow their dreams, John was asked when he knew he had his mom and dad's blessings to pursue whatever he wanted to do.

"When I took out the garbage and my mother thought I was borderline genius," he shared to hysterical laughter from the journalists. "I knew that they believed in me too much!"

The father of Ella, 7, an aspiring actress, and Jett, 15, with wife Kelly Preston elaborated: "I sang and danced for my family everyday—that was my job! They believed in me, so I *did* perform for them often. I recited scenes and lip-synched to records. They were forced to watch me! I had parental support early on. I was ready at age 7."

So, how does one take out the trash and be declared a near-genius? He quipped: "I probably did it with dance movements!"

Email at rvnepales_5585@yahoo.com, and read his blog, "The Nepales Report," on www.inquirerbloggers.net/nepalesreport.

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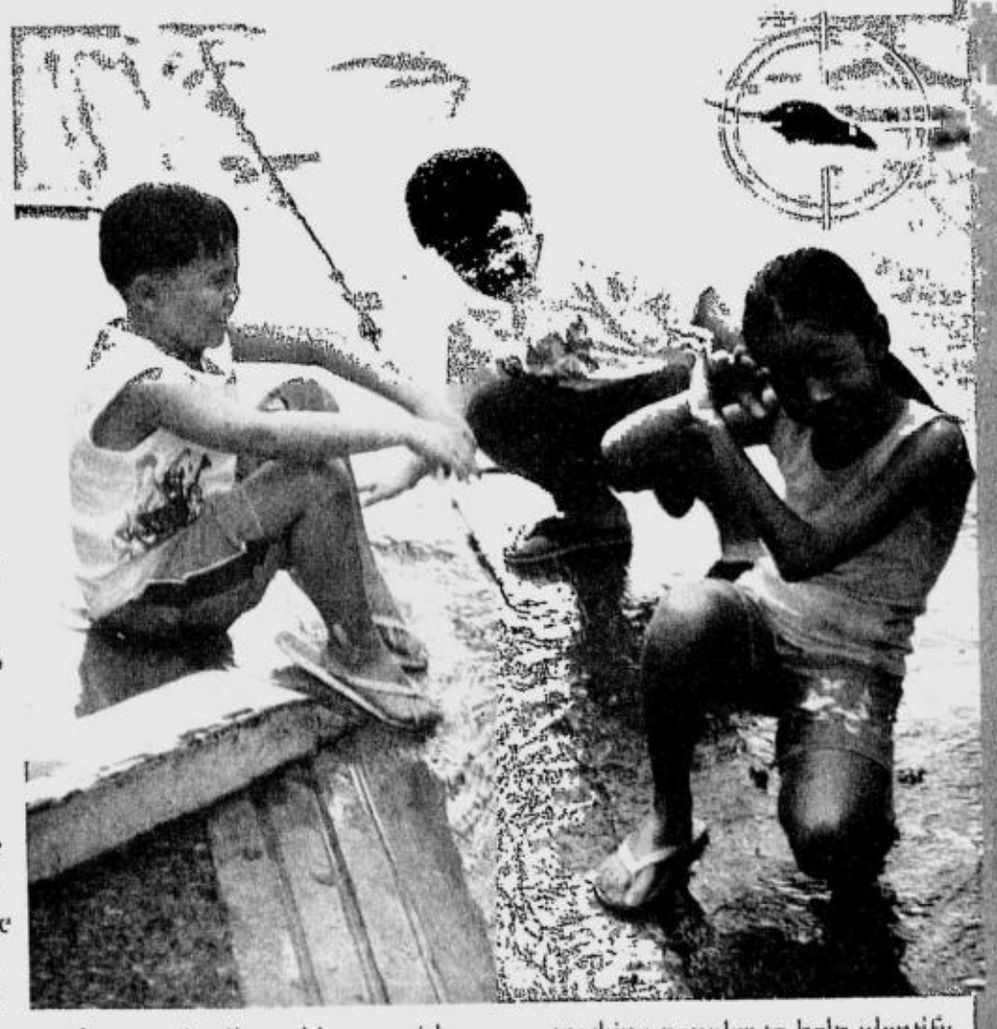

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5 TRANSFORMERS
1:35 4:20 7:05 9:50

6 TRANSFORMERS
12:05 2:50 5:35 8:20

7 FANTASTIC FOUR
1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50

8 indieSine: GMA Short Films
1:30 3:20 5:10 7:00 8:50

9 PARAISO
12:15 2:35 4:55 7:15 9:35

10 TIYANAKS
1:00 3:10 5:20 7:30 9:40

ERMITA
Ticket Price: P110 / P120

1 DIE HARD 4 11:00 1:45 4:30 7:15 10:00

2 BUG 12:00 1:55 3:40
FANTASTIC FOUR 4:05 6:00 8:00 10:00

3 TRANSFORMERS
12:15 3:10 6:05 9:00

4 PARAISO
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00

5 TIYANAKS
12:50 3:05 5:20 7:35 10:00

6 DIE HARD 4
12:30 3:20 6:10 9:00

7 TRANSFORMERS
11:00 1:45 4:30 7:15 10:00

METRO EAST
Ticket Price P100 / P110 682-8193 - 682-8190

1 TRANSFORMERS
2:50 5:50

2 DIE HARD 4
11:50 2:50 5:50 8:50

3 DIE HARD 4
12:20 3:20 6:20 9:20

4 TRANSFORMERS
11:45 2:50 5:50 9:00

5 PARAISO
12:00 2:15 4:30 6:45 9:00

6 FANTASTIC FOUR
1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00

7 DIE HARD 4
11:20 2:20 5:20 8:20

8 TIYANAKS
12:10 2:25 4:40 6:55 9:10

NOVALICHES
936-3231 / 936-3229-30

1 DIE HARD 4
2 DIE HARD 4
3 DIE HARD 4
4 TIYANAKS
5 TRANSFORMERS
6 TRANSFORMERS

PIONEER

1 DIE HARD 4
11:00 2:00 5:00 8:00

2 DIE HARD 4
1:30 4:30 7:30

3 TRANSFORMERS
3:15 5:55 8:35

4 TRANSFORMERS
12:05 2:45 5:25 8:05

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OPENS JULY 11

STA. ROSA
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1 DIE HARD 4
2 DIE HARD 4
3 TIYANAKS
4 FANTASTIC FOUR
5 TRANSFORMERS

LIPA
Ticket Price: P90 (043) 757-3664 (043) 312-5870

1 DIE HARD 4
2 DIE HARD 4
3 THE INVISIBLE
4 TIYANAKS
5 TRANSFORMERS

DASMARIÑAS
Ticket Price: P80 / P90 (046) 416-4332

1 FANTASTIC FOUR
2 TRANSFORMERS
3 DIE HARD 4
4 DIE HARD 4
5 TIYANAKS

IMUS
Ticket Price P100 (046) 875-3838 (046) 471-8188

1 DIE HARD 4
2 DIE HARD 4
3 NEXT
4 TRANSFORMERS
5 TIYANAKS
6 FANTASTIC FOUR

ANGELES
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1 DIE HARD 4
2 TRANSFORMERS
3 TIYANAKS
4 DIE HARD 4

TARLAC

1 OCEAN'S 13
2 28 WEEKS LATER
3 TRANSFORMERS

STARMILLS
Ticket Price P80 / P90 (045) 875-1927

1 TRANSFORMERS
2 FANTASTIC FOUR
3 TRANSFORMERS
4 TIYANAKS
5 DIE HARD 4
6 DIE HARD 4

BACOLOD
Ticket Price: P70 (034) 441-0459

1 DIE HARD 4
2 TRANSFORMERS
3 DIE HARD 4
4 RESERVE
5 THE INVISIBLE
6 TIYANAKS

ILOILO
Ticket Price: P70.50 / P80.50 (033) 336-8070

1 DIE HARD 4
2 TRANSFORMERS
3 DIE HARD 4
4 TRANSFORMERS
5 TIYANAKS
6 THE INVISIBLE

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OPENS JULY 11

SCREENING TIME	JULY 11 WEDNESDAY	JULY 12 THURSDAY	JULY 13 FRIDAY	JULY 14 SATURDAY	JULY 15 SUNDAY	JULY 16 MONDAY	JULY 17 TUESDAY
11:00 AM	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	SOLD OUT	FEW SEATS	OPEN	OPEN
2:00 PM	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN	SOLD OUT	SOLD OUT	OPEN	OPEN
5:00 PM	FEW SEATS	OPEN	OPEN	SOLD OUT	SOLD OUT	OPEN	OPEN
8:00 PM	SOLD OUT	FEW SEATS	SOLD OUT	SOLD OUT	SOLD OUT	OPEN	OPEN
11:00 PM	OPEN	OPEN	FEW SEATS	SOLD OUT	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN

Subject to change without prior notice. You may also call your nearest SM Cinema branch and The Podium Cinema for their respective advance ticket selling screening schedules.

METRO MANILA

SM MALL OF ASIA 556-0104
San Miguel Coca-Cola IMAX Theatre
SPIDER-MAN 3 8:00PM
Admission Prices: P 350
T-REX 1:00PM 4:30PM
Admission Prices: P 200
ANT BULLY 2:30PM 6:00PM
Admission Prices: P 250
1 TRANSFORMERS
2 DIE HARD 4
3 FANTASTIC FOUR
4 TRANSFORMERS
5 TIYANAKS
6 PARAISO

PREMIERE CINEMA
DIE HARD 4

CENTERSTAGE
TRANSFORMERS

THE PODIUM
CINEMA 1
DIE HARD 4
CINEMA 2
TRANSFORMERS
633-8976

SM NORTH EDSA 929-5452
1 DIE HARD 4
2 TRANSFORMERS
3 TRANSFORMERS
4 DIE HARD 4
5 TRANSFORMERS
6 DIE HARD 4
7 TRANSFORMERS
8 PARAISO
9 PARAISO
10 TIYANAKS
11 DIE HARD 4
12 TRANSFORMERS

SM MEGACINEMA 633-1901
1 DIE HARD 4
2 PARAISO
3 TRANSFORMERS
4 DIE HARD 4
5 TRANSFORMERS
6 TRANSFORMERS
7 NEXT
8 FANTASTIC FOUR
9 TRANSFORMERS
10 TRANSFORMERS
11 TRANSFORMERS
12 TIYANAKS

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 935-074
1 PARAISO
2 DIE HARD 4
3 TRANSFORMERS
4 TRANSFORMERS
5 FANTASTIC FOUR
6 DIE HARD 4
7 DIE HARD 4
8 TIYANAKS
9 TRANSFORMERS
10 TRANSFORMERS
11 WILDERNESS
12 NEXT

SM CITY STA. MESA 716-1416
1 DIE HARD 4
2 DIE HARD 4
3 TRANSFORMERS
4 TRANSFORMERS
5 TRANSFORMERS
6 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
7 FANTASTIC FOUR
8 PARAISO
9 TIYANAKS
10 NEXT

SM CITY SAN LAZARO 786-2488
1 DIE HARD 4
2 TRANSFORMERS
3 TRANSFORMERS
4 PARAISO
5 FANTASTIC FOUR
6 TIYANAKS

SM SOUTHMALL 806-6888
1 TRANSFORMERS
2 TIYANAKS
3 TRANSFORMERS
4 DIE HARD 4
5 DIE HARD 4
6 FANTASTIC FOUR
7 DIE HARD 4
8 TRANSFORMERS
9 PARAISO

SM CITY BICUTAN 776-3055
1 DIE HARD 4
2 TRANSFORMERS
3 TIYANAKS
4 TRANSFORMERS

SM CITY MANILA 523-9240
1 DIE HARD 4
2 TRANSFORMERS
3 NEXT
4 TRANSFORMERS
5 FANTASTIC FOUR
6 DIE HARD 4
7 OCEAN'S 13
8 PARAISO
9 BUG
10 TRANSFORMERS
11 TIYANAKS
12 TRANSFORMERS

SM CITY DASMARINAS (046)4323201-04
1 DIE HARD 4
2 TRANSFORMERS
3 TIYANAKS
4 TRANSFORMERS

SM VALENZUELA 293-3917
1 DIE HARD 4
2 TRANSFORMERS
3 TIYANAKS
4 TRANSFORMERS

SM CITY SUCAT 829-4975
1 TIYANAKS
2 DIE HARD 4
3 TRANSFORMERS
4 TRANSFORMERS

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SM CITY BACOOR (046)417-3868
1 NEXT
2 FANTASTIC FOUR
3 TRANSFORMERS
4 DIE HARD 4
5 TIYANAKS
6 PARAISO
7 TRANSFORMERS
8 DIE HARD 4

SM CITY CLARK (045)625-5844-45
1 TRANSFORMERS
2 TRANSFORMERS
3 DIE HARD 4
4 DIE HARD 4
5 TIYANAKS
6 PARAISO

SM CITY MARILAO (044)9332013-17
1 TRANSFORMERS
2 TIYANAKS
3 TRANSFORMERS
4 DIE HARD 4

SM CITY BATANGAS 885-6401-04
1 TRANSFORMERS
2 TRANSFORMERS/ MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY
3 DIE HARD 4
4 TIYANAKS

SM CITY PAMPANGA (045)6037681-85
1 TRANSFORMERS
2 DIE HARD 4
3 TRANSFORMERS
4 DIE HARD 4
5 PARAISO
6 TIYANAKS

SM CIY LIPA (043) 784-0187
1 TRANSFORMERS
2 DIE HARD 4
3 INVISIBLES
4 TIYANAKS

SM CITY LUCENA (042)7108977-80
1 DIE HARD 4
2 TRANSFORMERS
3 TIYANAKS
4 THE SHOOTER

SM CITY BAGUIO (074)6197838-39
1 DIE HARD 4
2 TIYANAKS
3 TRANSFORMERS
4 TRANSFORMERS

SM SUPERCENTER MOLINO (046)474-3160
1 DIE HARD 4
2 TRANSFORMERS
3 TRANSFORMERS
4 TIYANAKS

SM CITY STA. ROSA (049)5349811
1 TRANSFORMERS
2 TIYANAKS
3 DIE HARD 4
4 TRANSFORMERS

VISAYAS MINDANAO

SM CITY DAVAO (082)2976998
1 DIE HARD 4
2 PARAISO/ FANTASTIC FOUR
3 DIE HARD 4
4 TRANSFORMERS
5 TIYANAKS
6 TRANSFORMERS

SM CITY CAGAYAN (088)859-2884
1 TRANSFORMERS
2 TIYANAKS
3 TRANSFORMERS
4 DIE HARD 4

SM CITY ILOILO (033)3209422
1 TRANSFORMERS
2 INVISIBLES
3 DIE HARD 4
4 TIYANAKS
5 DIE HARD 4
6 TRANSFORMERS
7 RESERVED
8 PARAISO

SM CITY CEBU (032)231-3876
1 DIE HARD 4
2 TRANSFORMERS
3 DIE HARD 4
4 FANTASTIC FOUR
5 PARAISO
6 TIYANAKS
7 TRANSFORMERS
8 DIE HARD 4

SM CITY BACOLOD (034) 708 1010
1 TRANSFORMERS
2 DIE HARD 4
3 TIYANAKS
4 TRANSFORMERS

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*FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MOVIE LISTING, MTRCB RATING, SCREENING SCHEDULES AND THE LATEST HAPPENINGS AT SM CINEMA

Religious programming needs to be energized

By Nestor U. Torre

FOR YEARS NOW, we've been urging Catholic leaders to increase their use of media to spread the Good Word. To date, however, efforts in this direction have been phlegmatic at best, indicating that the Church in the Philippines doesn't adequately appreciate the exponential value of the use of media in evangelization.

Talking to different Catholic groups, we sense a distrust of media. Some "spiritual" people apparently believe that the media, especially TV and film, are "dirty," so good souls shouldn't have anything to do with them.

This is so wrong. The media aren't anything one way or the other, they're there to be used by people—bad or good—for their own objective or subjective ends.

Fear

So, let's get over our fear of the media and use them for good, OK?

One of the reasons why "good" people mistrust the media is ignorance. Some priests used to merely delivering sermons in church don't know much about media's multifarious communicative skills and powers, so they dismiss it as too newfangled to be taken seriously by "spiritual" people.

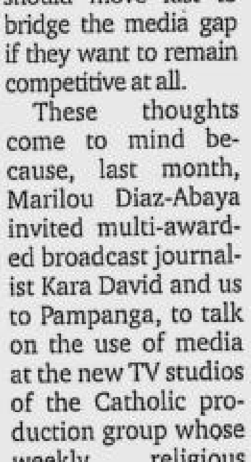
Wrong again. The jury has long arrived at its verdict in favor of media's exponential and versatile communicative power, so arguing and dilly-dalling about it is really a waste of time. The sooner Catholics understand and embrace the media, the better.

The use of media in evangelization should be made a strong part of religious formation in seminaries and novitiates. Parish workers should similarly be educated, about its skills and powers.

Media techniques can be learned —should be, soonest. As it is, Catholics have been left way behind by the Evangelicals in the use of radio and television, and they should move fast to bridge the media gap if they want to remain competitive at all.

These thoughts come to mind because, last month, Marilou Diaz-Abaya invited multi-awarded broadcast journalist Kara David and us to Pampanga, to talk on the use of media at the new TV studios of the Catholic production group whose weekly religious show, "Men of Light," has gotten such high marks from cable TV

RELIGIOUS/ G3



DIAZ-ABAYA. Has trained and guided the Pampanga TV group past its growing pains.

Paris Hilton, free but not forgiven

By Nestor U. Torre

WHEN PARIS HILTON WAS RECENTLY jailed, many people said it was about time, and it served her right.

After she was released from prison last week, however, some fans opted to take a more sympathetic stance. After all, Paris had paid for her infraction, hadn't she?

The plot thickened after the poor, little rich heiress was interviewed on TV by Larry King. She won points when she said that her stint in jail had changed her, from an egocentric, loose-living party girl to a more spiritual and responsible young woman who now wanted to be of help to others. Specifically, she said she would put up a halfway house for teenagers who, like her, had gotten into legal trouble.

Credibility

In the same interview, however, Paris claimed that she had never taken illegal drugs—and this weakened her credibility in a major way. Immediately, other media outlets countered with evidence of her apparent drug-related activities in the past, and viewers raised a howl of protest.

If, they muttered scornfully, Paris could prevaricate so blithely on that score, how could the other things she said be taken seriously? Some fans even faulted Larry King for accepting Paris' statements without question.

These and other developments have further complicated Paris' options after her abridged incarceration. Many people expected her to turn a new leaf, but even her most earnest resolve is being held in doubt by some viewers.

Is she really sincere about refocusing her life and career, to be of greater service to others? Definitely, the jury is still out on that score.

It's true that her recent, much-publicized run-in with the law has made her a hotter star, but her career will go either way from here on in, depending on how she handles her post-prison situation.

Point of view

Becoming a more responsible, giving celebrity sounds good, but from a practical point of view, it could dampen her career prospects, since seriousness of purpose isn't exactly boffo at the box office—at least as far as heretofore flighty starlets like her are concerned.

Take her hit TV show, "A Simple Life." It's premised on her spoof on her own flighty self wreaking havoc across conservative Middle America with her and her partner in crime, Nicole Ritchie's livid and occasionally even lewd antics.

If she does turn a new leaf, will she have to give up the "shocking" show, or will it be reformatted into something less controversial and thus less "fun" to view?

In the movies, Paris has generally played clueless, vapid types. If she now wants to project a more responsible image, these roles would have to give way to more complex, challenging and insightful parts.

Big question

The big question is, will earnest resolve be enough for her to be able to do justice to those demanding parts? Once again, the answer is a big "It depends..." —On what? Well, talent, for one!

Another relevant consideration is, would Paris' fans be at all interested in such an adjustment in her image, or would they prefer to continue seeing her as the silly star they love to hate and make fun of?

So many ifs and buts—and all because Paris hasn't convinced viewers that her stay in prison has indeed changed her for the better!

HILTON. Turning a new leaf isn't going to be easy for the "hot" heiress.

Religious programming . . . From page G2

viewers in Central Luzon.

The production group is about to go on free TV and produce other shows, so its prime mover, Bishop Ambo David was eager to update its staffers and key supporters in terms of media savvy, hence the ongoing series of talks Marilou has lined up.

For years now, she's trained and guided the group past its growing pains, and she's proud of what it's achieved to date. It goes without saying that, despite her current battle with cancer, she continues to work with the group to get it ready for its additional workload this year.

Evangelization

Our session with the production group proved to be an eye-opener in both directions. We sensed that the staffers and supporters we talked to could use all the inputs they could get—and we also learned a lot about why the Pampanga group is doing better than most in making fuller use of media in evangelization.

The training and inspiration provided by Marilou are key. So too is the active leadership of media-savvy Bishop Ambo, one of the priest-hosts of the popular "Men of Light" program.

While some other Catholic leaders have been sitting on their hands and debating with the wind, he's secured enough support to put up a new building to house the Pampanga production group's various activities.

The group's ongoing educational process is similarly important, as is the diocese's strong support of its media initiatives. Finally, viewers have a felt need for inspiring and illuminating shows, so "Men of Light" has been embraced by many people, who keep asking the group to produce more shows.

With such upbeat prospects, there's nowhere else to go but up for Pampanga's pioneering Catholic broadcasters. Other Catholic groups would do well to apprentice with them, to learn the ropes and get over their self-defeating distrust and disdain.

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2	TRANSFORMERS	2:20, 5:10, 8:00, 10:50 G
3	DIE HARD 4.0	1:55, 5:05, 8:15, 11:25 PG-13
4	TRANSFORMERS	12:00, 2:50, 5:40, 8:30, 11:20 G

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DIE HARD 4.0 PG13 1:30,4:10,6.50,9:30	TRANSFORMERS G 12:00,3.00,6:00,9:00	TRANSFORMERS G 1:00,4:00,7.00,10:00
DIE HARD 4.0 PG13 2:00,4:40,7:20,10:00	DIE HARD 4.0 PG13 1:00,3:40,6:20,9:00	DIE HARD 4.0 PG13 11:50,2:30,5:10, 7:50,10:30

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Cinema 4 TRANSFORMERS 10:30, 1:30, 4:30 7:30, 10:30 GP
Cinema 5 DIE HARD 4.0 11:00, 1:45, 4:30 7:15, 10:00 PG-13
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August 24 & 25, 2007	Ogie Alcasid & Regine Velasquez	8:00 PM

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Globe PLATINUM CINEMA
FANTASTIC 4: SILVER SURFER 1:10 / 3:20 / 5:30 / 7:40 / 9:50
PARAISO 12:20 / 2:40 / 5:00 / 7:20 / 9:40
TIYANAKS 1:00 / 3:10 / 5:20 / 7:30 / 9:40
DIE HARD 4 1:00 / 3:40 / 6:20 / 9:00
ALIMALL 5
1 TRANSFORMERS 12:30 / 3:10 / 5:50 / 8:30
2 TIYANAKS 11:55 / 2:05 / 4:15 / 6:25 / 8:35
3 DIE HARD 4 12:30 / 3:10 / 5:50 / 8:30
4 PARAISO 12:10 R4 / 1:30 / 3:50 / 6:10 / 8:30
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2 DIE HARD 4.0
3 TRANSFORMERS

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Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074)-(4449346)
1 DIE HARD 4.0
2 TRANSFORMERS

Jade Cinema (Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 DIE HARD 4.0
2 TIYANAKS
3 DIE HARD 4.0
4 TRANSFORMERS

Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati
Waltermart Center, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City Tel 816.4214 / 816.4216
1 TRANSFORMERS
2 TRANSFORMERS
3 TIYANAKS
4 DIE HARD 4.0

Centre Plaza Cinema (Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 OCEAN'S THIRTEEN
2 TIYANAKS

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687.6963 or 72
1 DIE HARD 4.0
2 TRANSFORMERS
3 DIE HARD 4.0
4 TRANSFORMERS

starmall EDSA-SHAW
(Mandaluyong) tel. 7266160
3 DIE HARD 4.0
4 TRANSFORMERS
5 RESERVED

metropolis star cinema
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(ALABANG) tel. 8504265, 6433694
1 TIYANAKS
2 DIE HARD 4.0
3 TRANSFORMERS
4 CAPE KARMA

Cinema 2000 Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart (Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 TIYANAKS
2 TRANSFORMERS
3 DIE HARD 4.0
4

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1 DIE HARD 4.0
2 TRANSFORMERS
3 TIYANAKS

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall (Biñan) tel. (049) 4111146
1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

PACIFIC MALL LUCENA CINEMAGIC
Pacific Mall Lucena Tel (042) 660-5271
1 TRANSFORMERS
2 DIE HARD 4.0
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix (Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
1 DIE HARD 4.0
2 TIYANAKS
3 TRANSFORMERS

Cinema 2000 Metrotown (Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
1 INVISIBLE
2 TIYANAKS
3 DIE HARD 4.0
4 TRANSFORMERS

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72
1 TRANSFORMERS
2 DIE HARD 4.0
3 DIE HARD 4.0
4 DIE HARD 4.0
5 DIE HARD 4.0
6 TRANSFORMERS
7 TRANSFORMERS
8 TIYANAKS
9 FANTASTIC FOUR
10 TRANSFORMERS

Cinema 2000 Waltermart (Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320
1 DIE HARD 4.0
2 TRANSFORMERS
3 TIYANAKS

Cinema 2000 Waltermart (Gapan) tel. (044) 4867736
1 DIE HARD 4.0
2 TRANSFORMERS

Lianas Cinema (Pasig) tel 640.4748
1 FANTASTIC FOUR
2 WILDERNESS

Blue Wave MARIKINA
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sto. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927
1 TRANSFORMERS
2 TIYANAKS
3 DIE HARD 4.0
4 RESERVED

Lianas Cinema (Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 TRANSFORMERS
2 KALABIT
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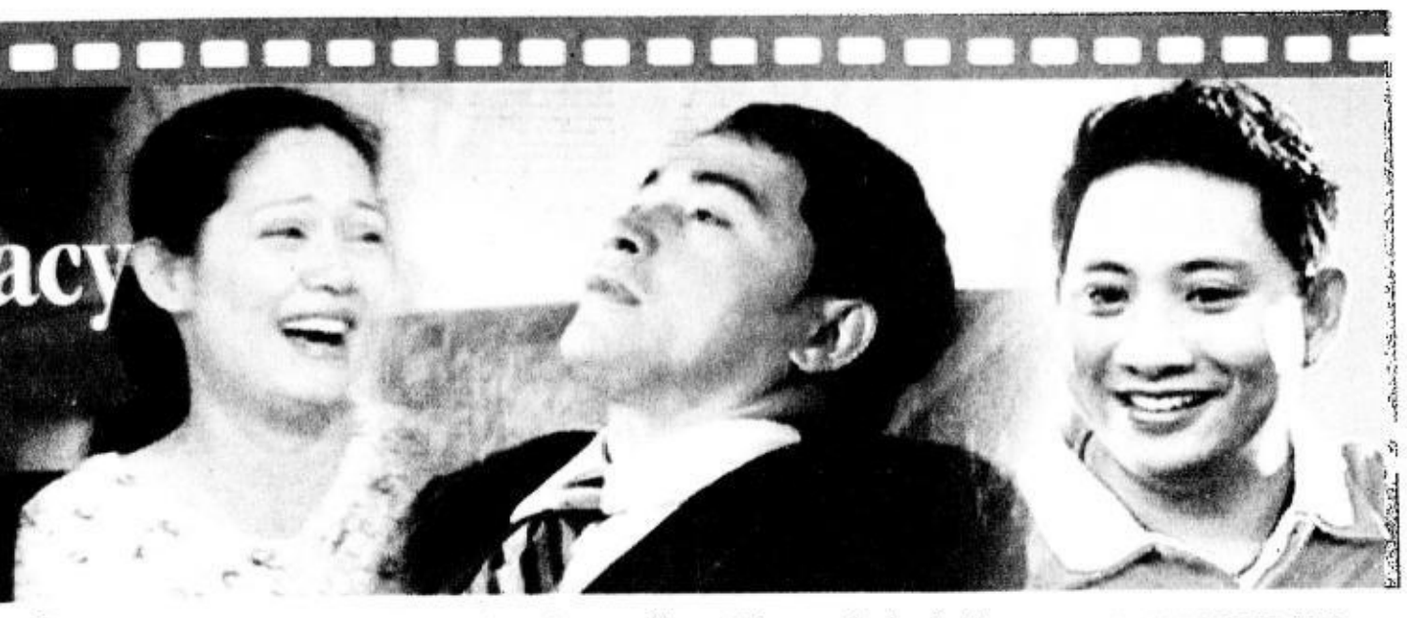
NOW SHOWING

Tragedy and advocacy inspire touching trilogy



SORIANO, MONTANO AND MICHAEL V. Topbill Gawad Kalinga's stories of hope and redemption.

By Rito P. Asilo

"Paraiso"

D: Jun Lana ("Umiyak Man Ang Langit")
Joel Ruiz ("Ang Kapatid Kong si Elvis")
Ricky Davao ("Marie")
S: Maricel Soriano, Cesar Montano, Michael V.

TRUE-TO-LIFE tragedy and selfless advocacy string together three stories of hope in Gawad Kalinga's well-meaning trilogy—with varying degrees of success:

In Lana's **"Umiyak Man ang Langit,"** Jocelyn Llorente (Maricel Soriano) manages to extract all four of her children after the December 2003 landslide in Liloan, Leyte buries them underground. But, luck turns to grief when she realizes that help came too late for her daughter, Crisel. The untimely deaths of Crisel and Marta, her pregnant younger sister (Jennifer Sevilla), almost drive her to insanity.

Joel Ruiz's **"Ang Kapatid Kong si Elvis"** follows the zany misadventures of two boys—Pepe (Gian Bernabe) and his rock-chewing "adopted" brother, Elvis (Paulken Bustillo)—after the former's kindhearted parents, Dr. Didoy and his wife, Diday (Michael V and Carmi Martin, respectively) adopt the latter.

In **"Marie,"** director Ricky Davao makes a brave attempt to bring the gut-wrenching story of Rudy Abad to the big screen. Rudy (Cesar Montano), who left the Philippines when he was only 17, sees his American Dream crumbling when his wife, Marie Rose (Lexie Schulze), dies in the 9/11 terrorist bombings in 2001.

Rudy, who just celebrated his 25th wedding anniversary with his wife, is constantly haunted by Marie's frenzied calls shortly before the second plane struck the World Trade Center. Along with Marie, some 176 of his friends perish in the tragedy. After battling a year-long depression, he comes home to donate rows of houses as a tribute to his departed wife.

On paper, Jocelyn and Rudy's stories tug at the heartstrings. The nature-induced calamity that wreaked havoc in Liloan and San Francisco in Leyte and the man-made tragedy in New York that shocked the world are stories that will haunt us for a long time. The magnitude of pain and suffering resulting from those tragic events defies comprehension.

Of course, behind those stories are cautionary lessons that continue to evade us. Production-wise, the trilogy's above-par technical components help sustain the audience's sympathy and interest.

Lana's segment is aided by striking images that disturb and linger. Unfortunately, despite the committed performances of Soriano and Nonie Buencamino (who plays her husband), the depiction of Llorente's story is bogged down by a weepy exposition.

Davao's intimate approach and careful handling of his story's touchy subject matter draw the viewers' attention to his protagonist's grief more than the issues of terrorism and religious extremism.

The elegiac quality of Davao's directorial style adds a sense of doom and nostalgia. Montano is no slouch at acting, and it's hard not to empathize with him. Unfortunately, his performance is compromised by his awkward, stilted handling of the English medium.

Ruiz's section is the simplest of the trilogy. Based on a script by Monster Jimenez from Michiko Yamamoto's story, the young director's light touch and fresh approach make the film more watchable than its thin story deserves. It doesn't say much, but the cast's spirited performances, eye-catching cinematography, and the film's ebullient spirit buoy up Arkeo's simple tale of love, sharing and redemption.

The movie, which entertains in its simplicity, proves that a filmmaker doesn't always have to be dirge-like heavy in his approach to storytelling to be effective—and affecting.

Lessons learned in the spectral world

MONTAGE

IN PATRICK LUSSIER'S NEW chiller, "White Noise: The Light," Abe Dale (Nathan Fillion) watches helplessly as his wife and son are killed. He fails to deal with his inability to save them—and commits suicide. He travels through a tunnel of white light and sees his wife and son beckoning to him—but doctors manage to save his life!

However, it turns out that he's changed in a key way: He can see into the spectral world and tell when people are going to die.

Eventually, he tracks down his loved ones' killer—and learns a terrifying truth. And, as he saves more people from death, Abe discovers that there's a terrible price to pay for interfering with fate. How far will he go to avert another senseless slaughter and restore the natural order of the world?

Concert at the Park

At 5 p.m on July 8, Concert at the Park presents the Transitory Form band in a program titled "Pinoy Ska." "Ska" combines the elements of Caribbean "menta" and Calypso with American jazz and rhythm and blues.

Movies on TV

On HBO today at 4:30 p.m., "Ed TV." Tomorrow at 9 p.m., "Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire." July 9 at 4:45 p.m., "The Gospel." July 10 at 8 a.m., "The Evening Star." July 11 at 7 p.m., "Meet the Fockers." July 12 at 12 noon, "Syriana." July 13 at 3:15 p.m., "Born on the Fourth of July."

On Cinemax today at 1 p.m., "The Two Jakes." Tomorrow at 2 p.m., "The Usual Suspects." July 9 at 10 p.m., "Double Jeopardy." July 10 at 5:15 p.m., "To Be the Best." July 11 at 2 p.m., "The 10 Commandments." July 12 at 9 p.m., "Donor Unknown." July 13 at 8 a.m., "Breakfast at Tiffany's."

Piolo takes a bride

The most eligible bachelor in Philippine show biz just got hitched—in a pictorial!

Piolo Pascual recently wrapped up a video and pictorial session to promote Max's Restaurant's new wedding packages, immensely enjoying what could easily be a preview at the most exciting day in his life.

Piolo was partnered with model Joy Hendrickson and played his role as a dashing groom to the hilt, amid Asian-Filipino and traditional floral wedding themes that are being offered by Max's this season.

The Max's pictorial is the first time that Piolo has posed as a groom for a brand that he endorses. The popular FIlipino restaurant has 113 branches in the Philippines and five in the United States.

PASCUAL (RIGHT). Plays groom to model Joy Hendrickson to promote Max's restaurants' wedding themes.

'Pobreng Alindahaw'

The CCP's Virgin Labfest stages J. Dennis Teodosio's short play, "Pobreng Alindahaw," at 3 and 8 p.m. today and 3 p.m. tomorrow. The allegory starts like a folktale for children but the issues raised by two dragonflies and a butterfly turn the comic fantasy into a serious look into personality. Teodosio's "Bagahe" will also have its final performance tomorrow at 8 p.m.

FILLION. Portrays a man who goes through a near-death experience in "White Noise: The Light."

'Litisang Bilog ng Caucasus'

Today and on July 11-14 and 18-21, Tanghalang Ateneo stages "Litisang Bilog ng Caucasus," its version of Bertolt Brecht's "The Caucasian Chalk Circle," which explores the themes of justice and morality. Call 426-6001 loc. 5121.

At Metropolis Star Alabang

Today, a *Pangkabuhayan* workshop. Tomorrow, Sabado Boys mall tour. July 15, Pinoy Pop Superstar mall tour. July 21, free Beadworks workshop. July 22, Rap Contest. July 28, Inter-Tenant Basketball Tournament. July 29, Yasmin Kurdi performs.

KKK exhibit

The KKK exhibit of photographs by Kidlat, Kawayan and Kabunyan de Guia at Silverlens Gallery (816-0044) has been extended to July 14. Kidlat Tahimik will screen his film, "Who Invented the Yoyo? Who Invented the Moon Buggy?" at 3 p.m. on July 14.

Mall tours, musical events

Jed Madela promotes his "Only Human" album at 5 p.m. tomorrow at SM Megamall.

Parokya ni Edgar sings cuts from its "Matira Matibay" album at 6 p.m. tomorrow at SM Pampanga.

Orange & Lemons promotes its "Moonlane Gardens" album today at SM Megamall.

Callalily holds its first anniversary party and Callalistas Grand Eye Ball at 7 p.m. today at the Eastwood Central Plaza.

Mark Bautista performs at SM Lucena today and at SM Batangas on July 29. He's also in Sarah Geronimo's Araneta Collsuem concert on July 14.

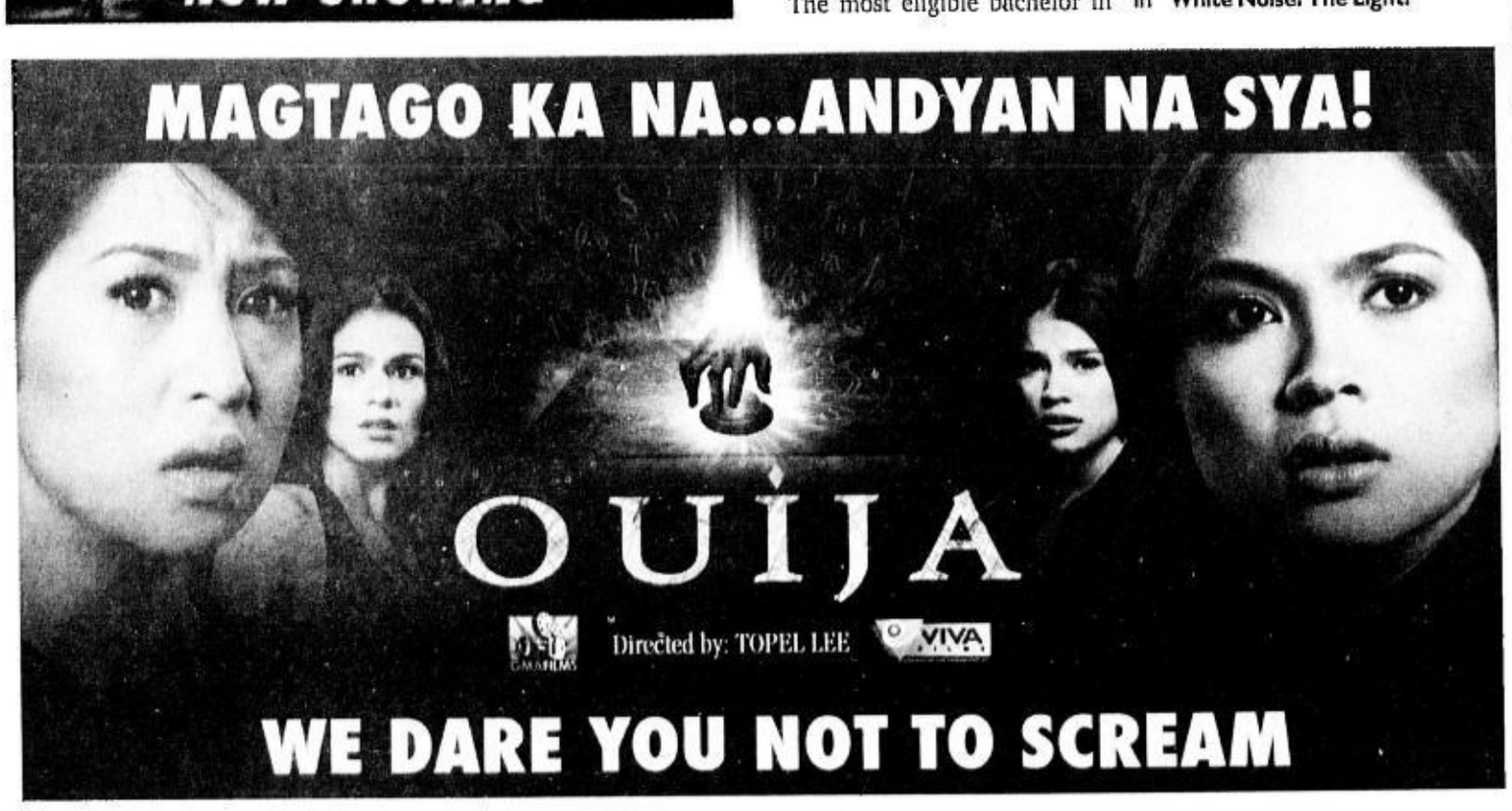
New singing star Mikl Hahn will launch her debut album on GMA-7's noontime show, "SOP," tomorrow.

Marc Nelson for Kenny Rogers Roasters

Marc Nelson is the image model and endorser of Kenny Rogers Roasters. He loves hanging out at some of Kenny's 36 branches, or calling for delivery.

He appreciates the fact that Kenny has the convenience of fast food but is full of freshly prepared and healthy choices, like Kenny's famous Roast Chicken, its full array of delicious grilled offerings, Roast Chicken Sandwich—and all those yummy fixins!

NELSON (seated, left) signs contract with Kenny Rogers Roasters' Bernadine Siy (seated, right), Atty. Jorge Cabildo (standing, left) and Karen Cosico.



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SATURDAY, JULY 7, 2007

H

Republic of the Philippines
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National Capital Region
DY Int'l Bldg., 1650 San Marcelino
cor. General Malvar St., Malate, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National	Position
APAC CUSTOMER SERVICES, INC. - PHILIPPINE BRANCH 4/F Plaza C . Northgate Cyberzone, Filinvest Corporate City, Alabang, Muntinlupa City	Flecknell Robert Thomas	Human Resources Director
ICT MARKETING SERVICES, INC. - EXTN. OFFICE 14/F RCBC Tower 2, Ayala Ave., Makati City	Randolph Mc Cormick Redden	Senior Director for Operations
INTERSTRATEGIC RISK MANAGEMENT INC. 4F Trafalgar Plaza, 105 H.V. dela Costa St., Salcedo Vill., Makati City	Jason Wayne Lucas	Consultant
PRODUCTION VILLAGE CORP. 7749 St. Paul Road, San Antonio Village, Makati City	Takeyuki Onishi	Director of Photography
DEEP6, INC. Unit 7-T Cyber One Building, Eastwood Cyberpark City, Bagumbayan, Q.C.	Sherry Lee	Vice-President
PARK SAM LANGUAGE AND TUTORIAL CENTER, INC. 2/F G & T Building, Sampaguita, Pasong Tamo, DZ, Makati City	So Young Park (w/o Im)	Administrator
CBC IMPORT & EXPORT TRADING LTD. CO. Room 602-A Taytana Plaza, Plaza Lorenzo Ruiz, Brgy 267, Zone 027, Binondo, Manila	Jinbiao Wang	Sales Supervisor
SKY ENGLISH LEARNING PLUS INC. #24 Panay Ave., Quezon City	Hye Jeong Shin	Supervisor
SOLVWARE INTERNATIONAL, INC. Cityland 10 Tower 2, Suite 609, 6815 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Billy Winford Britt	Vice President for Quality Assurance
HUAWEI TECHNOLOGIES PHILS. INC. 53/F PBCom Tower, Ayala Avenue, Makati City	Huaibing Gu	Account Manager
PILIPINAS INTERNATIONAL MARKETING SERVICES INC. 28/F Orient Square Bldg., Emerald Ave., Ortigas, Pasig City	Ja Nan Bawk Galau	Myanmar Call Center Associate
JUNG SUNG ENTERPRISES CORPORATION 2/F NOL Tower, Commerce Ave., Madrigal Business Park, Alabang, Muntinlupa City	Chihyoung Kim	Chief Operating Officer
DHK GLOBAL NETWORK SERVICE INC. UG-10 Globe Telecom Plaza, Pioneer Highland, Pioneer cor. Madison St., Mandaluyong City	Hyangweon Kang	Operations Manager
PHIL HAEBUB LEARNING CENTER INC. Prime Center, Prime St., cor. Enterprise St., Madrigal Business Park 2, Alabang, Muntinlupa City	Eon Hee Kim (w/o CHOI)	Teacher
DONGYANG CONST. PHILS. INC. 1105 Cityland Pasong Tamo Tower, 2210 Don Chino Roces Ave., Makati City	Woo Tae Lim	President
CLARIS LIFESCIENCES PHILIPPINES, INC. 12/F Valero St., Salcedo Village, Makati City	Jyoti Ranjan Rout	General Manager
24HRS CAR CENTER CORP. 8418 Dr. A. Santos Road, Paranaque City	Chung Suk Chun (w/o Soun)	Asst. Manager
TOP AMUSEMENT TECHNOLOGY INTERNATIONAL CORPORATION 22/F Burgundy Corporate Tower, Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City	Mei-Ling Wang	Risk Management Specialist
TOP AMUSEMENT TECHNOLOGY INTERNATIONAL CORPORATION 22/F Burgundy Corporate Tower, Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City	Yu-Shian Du a.k.a. Ethan Du	Computer Programmer Senior Specialist
TOP AMUSEMENT TECHNOLOGY INTERNATIONAL CORPORATION 22/F Burgundy Corporate Tower, Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City	Hong-Yeu Lin a.k.a. Kent Lin	Risk Management Specialist
PHIL HAEBUB LEARNING CENTER INC. Prime Center, Prime St. cor. Enterprise St., Madrigal Business Park 2, Alabang Muntinlupa City	Hyuk Jin Choi	General Manager
SOLVWARE INTERNATIONAL, INC. Cityland 10 Tower 2, Suite 609, 6815 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Markwin James Arnoldi	Vice President

If you have any information/objection to the abovementioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

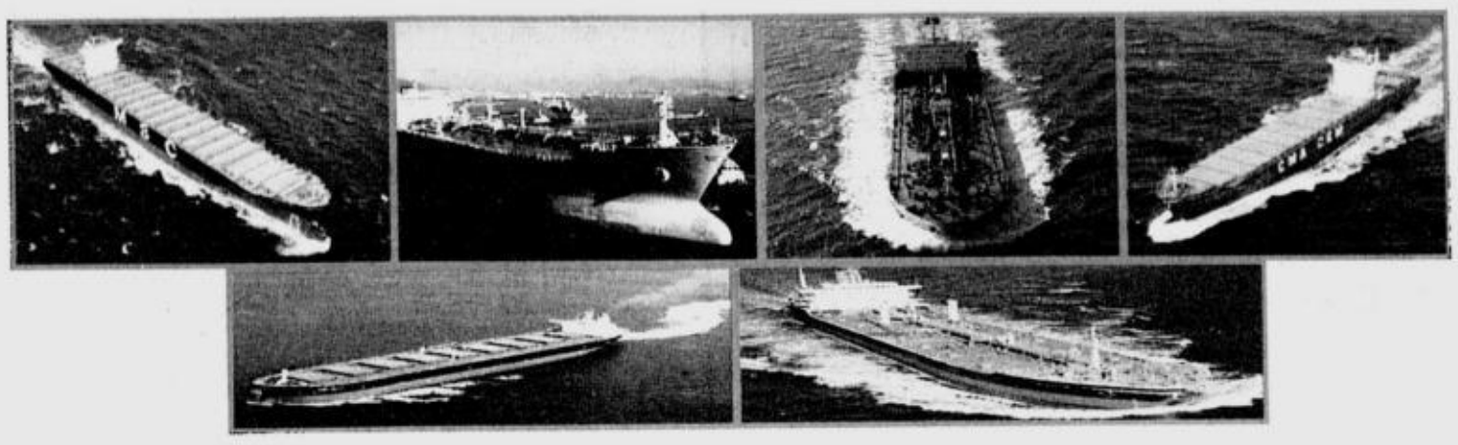
The DOLE conducts free seminar on Labor-Human Relations and Productivity. For more information, please call 338-2013 & 303-8920.

LOURDES M. TRASMONTE
Regional Director

(PDI – July 7, 2007)

HHIC-Phil Inc.

Redondo Peninsula Sitio Agusuhin, Cawag, Subic, Zambales, Philippines



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- Knowledgeable in **AUTO CAD**
- Excellent command in English language
- Proficient in MS Office

2. QUALITY ASSURANCE ENGINEER

Qualification/s:

- BS Mechanical/ Electrical/Chemical/Electronics & Communications Engineering graduates
- Male/Female, Not more than 35 years old
- Experience in Shipbuilding/Ship repair companies an advantage
- With background in monitoring and inspection of standard quality produced products

3. POLLUTION CONTROL OFFICER

Qualification/s:

- BS Chemical and Mechanical Engineering graduates
- Male/Female, Not more than 35 years old
- Preferential treatment will be given to those with related experience
- Must have knowledge in implementation of safety rules and regulations
- Knowledgeable in standard procedures and policies concerning safety, health and the environment

Fresh Graduates are welcome to apply!

Interested applicants willing to work in **Zambales** may send their resumé to HHIC – *Phil Inc.* at *Redondo Peninsula, Sitio Agusuhin, Cawag, Subic, Zambales 2209* or e-mail to hrhanjin@yahoo.com, HSA0210001@hanjinsc.com or PPA0720303@hhic-phil.com or PPA0720716@hhic-phil.com.
For inquiries call 047-252 5100 local 1213 & 1211 or fax us at 047-252-7611 and look for ***Mr. Arnel B. Soriano*** or ***Ms. Joan F. Salazar***

***Applicants who are currently employed in Shipbuilding/Ship repair companies will not be entertained*.**

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Bring personally or fax your bio-data at 02-4251762 with 1 passport size and 1 I.D. picture at our local booking office: Human Resource Manager 947 EDSA, Philam Homes, Quezon City (Near MRT North Station accross Trinoma Mall) on Monday & Tuesday, July 9 & 10, 2007 from 10 am to 5 pm ONLY).

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PROJECT MANAGER
► Minimum qualification of Degree or Professional License in Civil / Struct'l Eng'g. or equivalent ► Good command in both spoken and written English ► Should have more than 5 yrs. experience in Proj. Mgmt and Gen. Construction ► Not more than 40 y/o

Interested individuals may submit their resumés with picture not later than 11 July 2007 to **PRIMESTATE VENTURES INC. ► 5th floor 136 Malakas St. Diliman, Q.C. ► 925-3301 to 08 / 926-8037 ► or email to primestateventures@yahoo.com.ph**

Real Estate Brokers are welcome for accreditation.

Republic of the Philippines
COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS
Manila

CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES AND PERIODS ON PROHIBITED ACTS IN CONNECTION WITH THE CONDUCT OF THE JULY 14, 2007 PLEBISCITE TO RATIFY THE CONVERSION OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF GUIHULNGAN INTO A COMPONENT CITY IN THE PROVINCE OF NEGROS ORIENTAL TO BE KNOWN AS THE CITY OF GUIHULNGAN PURSUANT TO REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9409.

x----------x

ABALOS, Benjamin S. — Chairman
BORRA, Resurreccion Z. — Commissioner
TUASON, Florentino A., Jr. — Commissioner
BRAWNER, Romeo A. — Commissioner
SARMIENTO, Rene V. — Commissioner
FERRER, Nicodemo T. — Commissioner

Promulgated: 28 June 2007

RESOLUTION NO. 8204

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 51 of Republic Act No. 9409, the Commission on Elections shall conduct and supervise the plebiscite to ratify the conversion of the Municipality of Guihulngan into a component city in the Province of Negros Oriental to be known as the City of Guihulngan;

NOW, THEREFORE, pursuant to the powers vested in it by the Constitution, the Omnibus Election Code, Republic Act Nos. 7160, 7166, 9409 and other election laws, the Commission on Elections RESOLVED to adopt, as it hereby RESOLVES to adopt, the following Calendar of Activities and Periods on Prohibited Acts for the conduct of the July 14, 2007 plebiscite to ratify the conversion of the Municipality of Guihulngan into a component city in the Province of Negros Oriental to be known as the City of Guihulngan, to wit:

DATE/PERIOD	PLEBISCITE ACTIVITIES	PROHIBITED ACTS COVERED/INVOLVED
June 25, 2007 (MON) to July 20, 2007 (FRI)	PLEBISCITE PERIOD	1. Bearing, carrying or transporting firearms or other deadly weapons in public places, including any building, street, park, private vehicle or public conveyance, even if licensed to possess or carry the same, unless authorized in writing by the Commission. (Sec. 261 (p) (q) (s) OEC) as amended by Sec. 32 R.A. No. 7166; 2. Suspension of elective local officials. (Sec. 261 (x) OEC); 3. Transfer of officers and employees in the Civil Service. (Sec. 261 (h) OEC); 4. Organization or maintenance of reaction forces, strike forces or other similar forces. (Sec. 261 (u) OEC).
June 25, 2007 (MON) to July 14, 2007 (SAT)		1. Appointment or hiring of new employees; Creation or filing up of new position (Sec. 261 (g) (i) OEC); 2. Promotions or giving of salary increases, remuneration or privilege (Sec. 261 (g) (2) OEC); 3. Construction of public works, delivery of materials for public works and issuance of treasury warrants or similar devices for a future undertaking chargeable against public funds. (Sec. 261 (w) OEC); 4. Releases, disbursements or expenditures of public works and social services and development. (Sec. 261 (v) OEC); 5. Appointment or use of special policemen, special/confidential agents or the like. (Sec. 261 (m) OEC); 6. Use of armored land, water or aircraft (Sec. 261 (r) OEC); 7. Wearing of uniforms and bearing of arms. (Sec. 261 (s) OEC).
June 25, 2007 (FRI) to July 12, 2007 (THU)	CAMPAIGN PERIOD	1. Appointment or hiring of new employees; creation or filing up of new positions. (Sec. 261 (g) (i) OEC); 2. Construction of public works, delivery of materials for public works and issuance of treasury warrants or similar devices for a future undertaking chargeable against public funds (Sec. 261 (w) OEC); 3. Releases, disbursements or expenditures of public works and social services and development (Sec. 261 (v) OEC); 4. Appointment or use of special policemen, special confidential agents or the like. (Sec. 261 (m) OEC); 5. Use of armored land, water or aircraft (Sec. 261 (r) OEC); 6. Wearing of uniforms and bearing of arms (Sec. 261 (s) OEC).
July 4, 2007 (WED)	Submission to Comelec of complete list of all special policemen, special/confidential agents or persons performing similar functions in the employ of barangay chairman, municipal mayor or any appointing authority. Last day for appointment of members of Plebiscite Committees	
July 7, 2007 (SAT) to July 13, 2007 (FRI)	Posting of the Certified List of Voters as of the May 14, 2007 National and Local Elections.	
July 13, 2007 (FRI)	Inspection of Polling Places	1. Liquor Ban (starting 12 Midnight) – Selling, furnishing, offering, buying, serving, or taking intoxicating liquor, etc. (Sec. 261 (dd), (i), OEC). 2. Appointment or use of special policemen, special/confidential agents or the like. (Sec. 261 (m) OEC); 3. Use of armored land, water or aircraft. (Sec. 261 (r) OEC); 4. Wearing of uniforms and bearing of arms. (SEc. 261 (s) OEC); 5. Giving, accepting free transportation, food, drinks, and things of value (Sec. 89, OEC).
July 14, 2007 (SAT)	PLEBISCITE DAY	1. Voting more than once or in substitution of another (Sec. 261 (z) (2) and (3), OEC) 2. Cockfighting, and other forms of gambling, holding fairs, boxing and/or any other similar sports. (Sec. 261 (dd) OEC) 3. Giving, accepting free transportation, food, drinks, and things of value (Sec. 89, OEC). 4. Selling, furnishing, offering, buying, serving, or taking intoxicating liquor, etc. (Sec. 261 (dd). (1), OEC). 5. Opening of booths, or stalls for the sale of merchandise, refreshment, etc. within 30 meters radius from poling place (Sec. 261 (dd) (l) OEC)
	Convening of Municipal Plebiscite Board of Canvassers (MPBC) (6:00 p.m.)	
July 20, 2007 (FRI)	LAST DAY OF PLEBISCITE PERIOD	

Let this Resolution be published by the Education and Information Department in a newspaper of general circulation, and in a newspaper with local circulation in the Municipality of Guihulngan, Negros Oriental. The Deputy Executive Director for Operations shall furnish the Regional Election Director of Region VII, the Provincial Election Supervisor of Negros Oriental, the Election Officer of Guihulngan, Negros Oriental, the Secretary of the Department of the Interior and Local Government, the Secretary of the Department of Education, the Governor of Negros Oriental, the Municipal Mayor and Municipal Treasurer of Guihulngan, Negros Oriental and the DepED Supervisor of the Municipality of Guihulngan, Negros Oriental, with a copy of this Resolution.

The Election Officer of Guihulngan, Negros Oriental shall give this Resolution the widest publication in his municipality.

This Resolution shall take effect on the seventh day after its publication in a daily newspaper of general circulation in the Philippines and in a newspaper with local circulation in the Municipality of Guihulngan, Negros Oriental.

SO ORDERED.

BENJAMIN S. ABALOS
Chairman

RESURRECCION Z. BORRA
Commissioner

FLORENTINO A. TUASON, JR.
Commissioner

ROMEO A. BRAWNER
Commissioner

RENE V. SARMIENTO
Commissioner

NICODEMO T. FERRER
Commissioner

(PDI – July 7, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM
East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City
Tel. Nos. (632) 920-6401 • (632) 920-6446
E-mail: member_relations@sss.gov.ph • Web site: http://www.sss.gov.ph
Visit SSS website for Bid Invitation

INVITATION TO BID

"As Is, Where Is" Basis

PUBLIC BIDDING OF UNSERVICEABLE & SERVICEABLE MOTOR VEHICLES, UNSERVICEABLE COMPUTER EQUIPMENT & ACCESSORIES, UNSERVICEABLE FURNITURE & EQUIPMENT/SCRAP MATERIALS AND TWO-YEAR CONTRACT FOR THE SALE OF SCRAP PAPERS

The SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM (SSS) is inviting bidders for the public bidding of the following:

A. Six (6) Units Unserviceable Motor Vehicles (Lot 1)
Location : SSS Motor Pool, East Ave., Diliman,Q.C.
Minimum Bid Price : P80,000.00

Model/Make	Plate No.
1. TOYOTA COROLLA	SBY-731
2. TOYOTA COROLLA	SBY-726/PTC-106
3. TOYOTA LITE ACE	SDM-392
4. TOYOTA LITE ACE	SDM-268
5. PROTON WIRA	SEW-887
6. TOYOTA TAMARAW FX	SEA- 744

B. Four (4) Units Serviceable Motor Vehicles (Lot 2)
Location : SSS Motor Pool, East Ave., Diliman,Q.C.

Model/Make	Plate No.	Minimum Bid Price
1. TOYOTA TAMARAW FX	SEA-755	P40,000.00
2. TOYOTA TAMARAW FX	SEA-526	P40,000.00
3. TOYOTA LITE ACE	SDM-279	P60,000.00
4. TOYOTA LITE ACE	SDM-289	P60,000.00

C. Various Unserviceable Computer Equipment & Accessories
Location : SSS Bagbag Records Center, Quirino Highway, Novaliches, Q.C.
Minimum Bid Price : P25,000.00

D. Various Unserviceable Furniture & Equipment/Scrap Materials
Location : SSS Bagbag Records Center, Quirino Highway, Novaliches, Q.C.
Minimum Bid Price : P130,000.00

E. TWO-YEAR CONTRACT FOR THE SALE OF SCRAP PAPERS
Location : SSS Main Office, East Avenue, Q.C.
SSS Bagbag Records Center, Quirino Highway, Novaliches, Q.C.
Minimum Bid Price : -P1,448,452.00

Particulars	Estimated Volume in Kg	Minimum Bid Price	
		Price/Kg	Estimated Gross Sales Amount
Disposable Records-White	132,000	P10.20	P1,346,400.00
Disposable Records-Colored/Assorted	550	P6.00	3,300.00
Old Newspapers and magazines	220	P6.60	1,452.00
Used Kraft Papers	8,250	P5.00	41,250.00
Assorted trimmings	100	P7.00	700.00
Check Boards	50	P7.00	350.00
Used X-Ray Plates	1,100	P50.00	55,000.00
Estimated Gross Sales Amount			P1,448,452.00

The complete set of Bid Documents shall be issued to bidders by the Disposal Committee Secretariat, c/o Ms. Prima Calabia, with Tel. Nos. (02) 435-9860 or (02) 920-6401 loc 5512/5507 on July 13 & 16, 2007 at the Office Services Dept., 2/F SSS Bldg., East Ave., Quezon City, upon application and payment of a non-refundable fee of P200.00 per set.

The SSS will hold a pre-bid conference and site inspection open to all interested parties on July 19 & 20, 2007 at the above-indicated addresses.

Sealed bids in the prescribed form and accompanied by the Bid Security in the form and amount indicated in the Bid Documents shall be received until 2:00 p.m. on July 27, 2007 at the Disposal Committee Secretariat and shall then and there be opened and publicly read.

The SSS reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason, to waive any formality or technicality, and to award to any bidder whose proposal is deemed most advantageous to the SSS. The SSS neither assumes any obligation for any loss whatsoever that may be incurred by the bidders in the preparation of their respective bids nor does the SSS guarantee that an award will be made.

AVP MILAGROS M. PAGAYATAN
Chairman, Disposal Committee

(PDI – July 7, 2007)

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

Republic of the Philippines
Mindanao Rural Development Project II
Proposed Concreting of Damaniog Bridge Approach
(Code No. 02-MSK-ShK-07)

1. The Government of the Philippines (GOP) *has applied* for a Loan from the World Bank toward the cost of Mindanao Rural Development Project II, and it intends to apply part or the whole of the proceeds of this Loan, together with the GOP counterpart funds, to payments under the contract for Concreting of Damaniog Bridge Approach, Code No. 02-MSK-ShK-07.
2. The *Municipality of Sultan Kudarat*, implementing partner of the Department of Agriculture, now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders for *Proposed Concreting of Damaniog Bridge Approach.*[2] Completion of the Works is required by *86 Calendar Days.*
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act No. 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act. Subject to exceptions stated in this Bidding Documents, only Bids from Bidders who pass an eligibility check will be opened. The Bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine its responsiveness to the technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded in the Lowest Calculated Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during post-qualification.
4. The documents required in the Eligibility Documents shall be submitted as part of the Technical Documents of the Bidders as provided in the Instructions to Bidders.
5. Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from the Bids and Awards Committee and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Mondays to Fridays.
6. A complete set of Bidding Documents in English may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of *Five Thousand Pesos (P5,000.00).* The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the bidder or his authorized representative on or before 9:00 AM on *August 13, 2007.*
7. The *Municipality of Sultan Kudarat* will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all Eligible Bidders at 9:00 AM on *August 02, 2007* at the following address Mayor's Office Conference Hall, Sultan Kudarat, Shariff Kabunsuan.
8. Eligible Bidders must submit their Bids at the address below on or before *August 14, 2007* at 9:00 A.M. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form of cash, certified (manager's or cashier's) check, bank guarantee and in an amount specified in the bid documents. Late Bids shall not be accepted. Bid opening shall be on *August 14, 2007,* 9:00 AM at Mayor's Office Conference Hall, Sultan Kudarat, Shariff Kabunsuan. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidder's representative who choose to attend at the address below at 9:00 a.m. on August 14, 2007.
9. The Municipality of Sultan Kudarat reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

(Sgd.) RAMON J. AYSON
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee
Municipal Hall, Datumangcob, Sultan Kudarat, Shariff Kabunsuan 9605
(064) 429-0079; Telefax No. 064-429-0081

(PDI – June 30 & July 7, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health
DR. JOSE FABELLA MEMORIAL HOSPITAL
Manila

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Dr. Jose Fabella Memorial Hospital invites interested bidders to bid for:

	ABC
EQUIPMENT RENTAL Immunology Analyzer	P450,000.00/mo (P5,400,000.00/yr.)

Bid documents may be secured at the BAC Secretariat, Administrative Office upon payment of a non-refundable fee. For details, please contact telephone no. 735-7144.

All particulars relative to eligibility, bid security, performance, pre-bid, opening of bids, evaluation, post-qualification and award shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its implementing rules and regulations.

Schedule of Activities:

	Date/Time	Venue
Pre-bid Conference	July 16, 2007 2:00 pm	Reception Room
Bid Opening	July 27, 2007 2:00 pm	Admin. Conference Room

The DJFMH reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any formality found therein and to accept such bids as may be considered advantageous to the government.

The DJFMH-BAC assumes no obligation to compensate or indemnify the bidders for any expenses or losses that may be incurred in the preparation of bids nor does it guarantee that an award will be made.

(Sgd.) ELISEA S. MARQUEZ, M.D., D.P.B.A.
Chair, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI–July 7, 2007)

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East Avenue, Quezon City
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- 4 years Residency in General Surgery accredited by PCS (Board eligible)

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II. **Biological & Clinical Laboratory Division**
III. **CV Radiological Sciences Division**
IV. **1 year Fellowship Program**
1. Radiology
2. Nuclear Medicine
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- *Academic year 2008 starts on January 1, 2008*

General Requirements:
1. Medical Diploma
2. Transcript of Records with the General Weighted Average
3. Itemized Board Rating
4. Three (3) Letters of Recommendation with at least one letter written by the Training Officer &/or Director of the previous Training Programs (duplicate letters or photocopies will not be accepted)
5. Four (4) pcs 2" x 2" colored picture

Please address your communications to:
ARISTIDES G. PANLILIO, M.D.
Department Manager II
The Department of Education, Training and Research
Philippine Heart Center
East Avenue, Quezon City

For further inquiries, please contact Ms. Carmela O. Rivera or Ms. Cleopatra Q. Palencia with Tel. Nos. 925-24-01 locals 3234, 3235, 3236 & 3237 and Telefax 926-9622, or you can email to oer@phc.gov.ph

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Republic of the Philippines
NATIONAL HISTORICAL INSTITUTE
NHI Bldg., T.M. Kalaw St., Ermita, Manila

BULLETIN OF VACANT POSITIONS
(In compliance with RA 7041)

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER V SG-18, Item No. NHI-NCCAC-ADOF5-4-2004. Bachelor's degree; 2 years of relevant experience; 8 hours of relevant training; Career Service Professional/Second Level Eligibility.

HISTORY RESEARCHER II SG-14, Item No. NHI-NCCAC-HTRYR2-29-1998. Bachelor's degree; 1 year of relevant experience; 4 hours of relevant training; Career Service Professional/Second Level Eligibility.

SHRINE GUIDE SG-06, Item No. NHI-NCCAC-SHRG-4-1998. Completion of two years studies in college. Experience none required; Training none required; Career Service Sub-Professional/First Level Eligibility

ADMINISTRATIVE AIDE IV SG-04, Item No. NHI-NCCAC-ADA4-4-2004. Completion of two years studies in college; Experience none required; Training none required; Career Service Sub-Professional/First Level Eligibility.

Interested and qualified applicants may apply in person or send Comprehensive Resumé, 2x2 photo and Transcript of Records to the National Historical Institute, NHI Bldg., T.M. Kalaw St., Ermita, Manila. Deadline for submission of applications is on July 20, 2007.

WANTED FOR IMMEDIATE HIRING

1) **PRODUCTION ASST.** - Male, not over 35 yrs old, BSME grad., adept in fundamentals for the design & application of commercial refrigeration, and servicing/maintenance of refrigerated Foodservice Equipment, preferably w/ advance theoretical knowledge in RAC.
2) **SALES REPRESENTATIVES** – Female, marketing-related course graduate, result oriented individual, aggressive w/ pleasing personality, hardworking, honest, trustworthy & willing to be assigned on field works.
3) **SERVICE COORDINATOR** - Female, not over 30 yrs. old, grad. of any 4-yr. course, exp. in handling service works pref. w/ knowledge in industrial refrigeration operations, w/ good communication skills, computer literate, focused & hardworking.
4) **GRAPHIC ARTIST** - Female, 20-30 yrs. old, pref. BFA grad., hardworking and proficient in Digital design for print media. ☛ Interested applicants must apply in person for interview or call/send resume w/ latest 1x1 picture to : **HRD Dept. Contact: 651-1472/73 Evelyn L. Sanchez/E-mail: evesanchez 51@yahoo.com**

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Email : subicblueribbon@yahoo.co.kr

INVITATION TO BID "AS IS WHERE IS"
Damaged Motor Vehicles

2005 Toyota Vios 1.3 J M/T / ZBX-310
2006 Toyota Vios 1.3 J M/T / TYH-412
2005 Mitsubishi Montero Sport 2.8L / ZBC-714
1994 Toyota Corolla M/T / RNA-561
1994 Honda Civic ESI / TTM-400
2007 Ford Everest 4x2 M/T / ZHB-340

For particulars, please call
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c/oTristan Yoro & Arvin Calipjo
at Tel. No. 815-30-00

(PDI - July 7 & 8, 2007)

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Republic of the Philippines

COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS

Manila

RULES AND REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE CONDUCT OF THE JULY 14, 2007 PLEBISCITE TO RATIFY THE CONVERSION OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF GUIHULNGAN INTO A COMPONENT CITY IN THE PROVINCE OF NEGROS ORIENTAL TO BE KNOWN AS THE CITY OF GUIHULNGAN, PURSUANT TO REPUBLIC ACT 9409.

ABALOS, Benjamin S. — Chairman
BORRA, Resurreccion Z. — Commissioner
TUASON, Florentino A., Jr. — Commissioner
BRAWNER, Romeo A. — Commissioner
SARMIENTO, Rene V. — Commissioner
FERRER, Nicodemo T. — Commissioner

x - x

Promulgated: 28 June 2007

RESOLUTION NO. 8205

The Commission on Elections, by virtue of the powers conferred upon it by the Constitution, the Omnibus Election Code, the Local Government Code of 1991, Republic Act No. 7166. Republic Act No. 9409 and other election laws, **RESOLVED** to promulgate, as it hereby **RESOLVES** to promulgate, the following rules and regulations to govern the July 14, 2007 plebiscite to ratify the conversion of the Municipality of Guihulngan into a component city in the Province of Negros Oriental to be known as the City of Guihulngan.

SEC. 1. Supervision and control. – The Commission on Elections shall have direct control and supervision over the conduct of the plebiscite.

SEC. 2. Expenses and election forms and paraphernalia. – The expenses in holding the plebiscite, which shall include the printing of official ballots, plebiscite returns and other forms; the procurement of supplies and paraphernalia; the per diems of the members of the Plebiscite Committees, the overtime compensation of the Municipal Plebiscite Board of Canvassers, and their support staff; other operational and incidental expenses; and the costs of publication of resolutions and information materials, shall be borne by the Municipality of Guihulngan, Province of Negros Oriental.

For this purpose, the Office of the Deputy Executive Director for Operations (ODEDO) shall prepare the budgetary requirements of its office and require the proponent to immediately appropriate and remit the necessary amount.

The Committees on Allocation, Printing, Reception and Verification, Packing and Shipping, the Administrative Services Department and the Information Technology Department shall prepare their itemized administrative, operational and technical budgetary needs, which shall be reviewed and consolidated by the ODEDO, which shall submit the same to the Commission *En Banc*.

SEC. 3. Posting of Republic Act No. 9409 (R.A. 9409) – At least ten (10) days prior to the day of the plebiscite, the EO of Guihulngan, Negros Oriental, shall cause the posting of copies of Republic Act No. 9409, in all the polling places of Guihulngan, Negros Oriental.

SEC. 4. Information campaign. – An objective information campaign shall be conducted in the whole Municipality of Guihulngan, Negros Oriental, to commence on June 25, 2007 to July 12, 2007. During this period, civic, professional, religious, business, youth and any other similar organizations may hold symposia, public rallies or meetings to enlighten the voters of the Municipality of Guihulngan, Negros Oriental, on the plebiscite issues, and to campaign for or against the ratification of R.A. No. 9409. Constructive discussions and debates shall be encouraged, and the voters assured of the freedom to voice their opinion regarding the issues, advantages or disadvantages thereof.

The EO of Guihulngan, Negros Oriental, in coordination with the local government officials, mass media, NGOs and religious groups shall convene barangay assemblies or "*pulong-pulongs*" for such constructive discussions and debates.

SEC. 5. Date of plebiscite and voting hours. – The plebiscite shall be held on July 14, 2007. The voting start at seven o'clock in the morning and end at three o'clock in the afternoon.

SEC. 6. Area of coverage. – The plebiscite shall be held in the whole Municipality of Guihulngan, Negros Oriental.

SEC. 7. Who may vote. – All qualified voters of Guihulngan, Negros Oriental, duly registered as of the May 14, 2007 National and Local Elections and entitled to vote in the plebiscite.

The EO of Guihulngan, Negros Oriental, shall prepare the lists of voters for use in the plebiscite in accordance with Section 11 hereof.

SEC. 8. Plebiscite Committee Composition, Compensation; Duties and Functions. – There shall be a Plebiscite Committee (Committee) composed of a Chairman, a Poll Clerk and a Third Member who shall all be public school teachers, to be appointed by the Commission through the EO of Guihulngan, Negros Oriental, to conduct the voting and counting of votes in each polling place. In case there are not enough public school teachers, the EO shall appoint teachers in private schools, employees in the civil service, or other citizens of known probity and competence who are registered voters of the municipality, provided that the Chairman of the Plebiscite Committee shal be a public school teacher.

Each member of the Committee shall be entitled to a per diem of One Thousand Pesos (Php1,000.00) for services rendered on the day of the plebiscite.

The Committee shall have the following powers and duties:

(a) Supervise and conduct the voting in the polling place on July 14, 2007;

(b) Count the votes and thereafter prepare the plebiscite returns and other required documents/reports and distribute the same as herein provided;

(c) Furnish watchers certificate of votes upon request;

(d) Return the book/s of voters to the EO, through the principal of the polling centers, and deliver the other plebiscite paraphernalia to their respective custodians for safekeeping not later than July 14, 2007;

(e) Act as deputies of the Commission in the supervision and control of the plebiscite in the polling places wherein they are assigned to ensure the holding of free, orderly, honest, peaceful and credible plebiscite;

(f) Maintain order within the polling place and its premises, keep access thereto, open and unobstructed, and enforce obedience to its lawful orders.

If any person shall refuse to obey lawful orders of the Committee or shall conduct himself in a disorderly manner in its presence or within its hearing thereby interrupting or disturbing its proceedings, the Committee may issue an order in writing directing any peace officer to take such person into custody until the adjournment of the meeting, but such order shall not be executed as to prevent the person so taken into custody from exercising his right to vote. Such order shall be executed by any peace officer to whom it may be delivered, but if none is present, by any other person deputized by the Committee in writing; and

(g) Perform such other functions/duties as may be prescribed by the Commission.

SEC. 9. Disqualifications. – (a) No person shall serve as chairman or member of the Committee if he is related within the fourth civil degree of consanguinity or affinity to any member of the same Committee.

(b) No member of the Committee shall engage, directly or indirectly, in any partisan political activity or take part in the plebiscite, except to discharge his duties as such, and to vote.

SEC. 10. Precincts and polling places. – The precincts established for the May 14, 2007 National and Local Elections shall be the same precincts to be used in the July 14, 2007 Plebiscite.

SEC. 11. Precinct Level Computerized Voters List (PCVL) and Election Day Computerized Voters List (EDCVL). – The EO of Guihulngan, Negros Oriental, shall print four (4) copies of PCVL which shall be certified by the Election Registration Board (ERB). The two (2) copies of the PCVL shall be given to the Committees for use on plebiscite day. The other two (2) copies of the PCVL shall be distributed as follows:

(a) One copy for posting at the Office of the Election Officer of Guihulngan, Negros Oriental; and
(b) One copy for posting at the bulletin board of the Municipal Hall of Guihulngan, Negros Oriental.

The Information Technology Department shall print two (2) copies of the Election Day Computerized Voters List (EDCVL).

SEC. 12. Distribution of Plebiscite Forms and Supplies. – The Municipal Treasurer of Guihulngan shall, in coordination with the EO of same municipality, distribute the plebiscite forms and supplies to the Committees. The EO or his/her authorized representatives shall release the Books of Voters and the PCVL to the School Principal concerned who shall in turn release them to the Plebiscite Committees.

SEC. 13. Official ballots. – The official ballots shall be distributed at the ratio of one ballot per voter, and three (3) additional ballots per precinct for use by the members of the committee who may wish to avail of their voting privilege.

The official ballots to be used in the plebiscite shall bear the following heading **"OFFICIAL BALLOT"; "PLEBISCITE"; "JULY 14, 2007"; "MUNICIPALITY OF GUIHULNGAN, PROVINCE OF NEGROS ORIENTAL";** and underneath the following instructions: **"Fill out this ballot secretly inside the booth. Do not put any distinctive mark on any part of this ballot."**

The following question shall be provided in the official ballots:

"DO YOU APPROVE OF THE CONVERSION OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF GUIHULNGAN INTO A COMPONENT CITY TO BE KNOWN AS THE CITY OF GUIHULNGAN IN THE PROVINCE OF NEGROS ORIENTAL PURSUANT TO REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9409?"

☐

SEC. 14. Preliminaries to the Counting of Votes. – (a) The Committee shall clear the table of all unnecessary writing paraphernalia.

b) The Committee shall open the ballot box, take out the ballots from the compartment for valid ballots and, without unfolding or exposing their contents, examine them using the following guidelines:

1. Ballots folded together – The Committee shall ascertain that each fold consists of a single ballot.

   If in the course of the examination, ballots are found folded together before they were deposited in the ballot box, they shall be placed in an envelope for excess ballots.

2. Excess ballots – The Committee shall count the ballots and compare the number of ballots with the number of voters who actually voted.

   If there are more ballots than the number of voters who actually voted, follow the procedures provided for in Sec. 15 (b) hereof.

3. Ballots with detachable coupons – In case ballots with their detachable coupons are found in the box, the coupon shall be detached and deposited in the compartment for spoiled ballots, and the ballots shall be included in the pile of valid ballots.

4. Ballots with the word "spoiled" – If ballots with the word "spoiled" should be found, they shall be placed in the compartment for spoiled ballots.

   The ballots deposited in the compartment for spoiled ballots shall be presumed to be spoiled ballots, whether or not they contain such notation; but if the Committee should find that during the voting any valid ballot was erroneously deposited in this compartment, or if any ballot separated as excess or marked had been erroneously deposited therein, the Committee shall open said compartment after the voting and before the counting of votes for the sole purpose of drawing out the ballots erroneously deposited therein. It shall then prepare and sign a statement of such fact and lock the ballot box with its three keys immediately thereafter. The valid ballots so withdrawn shall be mixed with the other valid ballots, and the excess or marked ballots shall be placed in their proper envelopes which shall for such purposes be opened and again labeled, sealed, signed and kept as hereinafter provided.

c) Excess and spoiled ballots shall not be read in the counting of votes.

d) The Poll Clerk shall take hold of the plebiscite returns and the third member shall tack the tally board on the blackboard or any available space within the plain view of the Committee, watchers and the public.

SEC. 15. Manner of Counting of Votes. – The counting of votes shall be public without interruption or delay until completed and shall proceed as follows:

a) The Committee shall open the ballot box, take out the ballots and without unfolding them or exposing their contents except so far as to ascertain that each ballot is single, compare the number of ballots in the ballot box with the number of voters who actually voted as recorded in the Minutes of Voting and Counting.

b) If there are more ballots found than there are voters who actually voted, all the ballots shall be returned inside the ballot box and thoroughly mixed therein. The Poll Clerk, without seeing the ballots and with his back to the ballot box, shall publicly draw out as many ballots as may be equal to the excess, and without unfolding them, place them in an envelope which shall be marked "excess ballots" and shall be sealed and signed by the Committee.

   If there is no excess or the excess has been taken out, the Committee shall form separate piles of 100 ballots each which shall be held together by rubber band.

c) The Chairman shall take the ballots of the first pile and read the ballots one by one; while the Poll Clerk and Third Member shall simultaneously record on the plebiscite returns and tally board, respectively, each vote as it read by the Chairman.

   Each vote shall be recorded by a vertical line (tara), except every fifth vote, which shall be recorded by a diagonal line crossing the previous four vertical lines

   After finishing the first pile, the Committee shall count the tallies for the Affirmative and Negative votes and record the sub-totals in the column immediately after the last tara recorded in the plebiscite returns and tally board, respectively.

   The Poll Clerk and the Third Member shall compare the tallies reflected in the election returns and tally board.

   In case of discrepancy, a recount shall be made. The ballots shall again be grouped together as before the reading.

d) Thereafter, the same procedures shall be followed for the second and subsequent piles of ballots.

e) After all the ballots for the precinct have been counted, the Committee shall:

   1. Sum up the sub-totals of recorded Affirmative and Negative Votes and enter the grand total in words and in figures in the plebiscite returns and tally board;
   2. See to it that the entries in the first copy of the plebiscite returns are clearly impressed and reflected properly in the other two (2) copies;
   3. Sign and affix their thumb marks on the certification portion printed at the bottom of the plebiscite returns and tally board; and
   4. Place the counted ballots in an envelope provided for the purpose, close the envelope with a serially numbered paper seal, sign and deposit the same in the compartment for valid ballots. The accomplished tally board, certified by the Committee, shall also be deposited in the compartment for valid ballots.

SEC. 16. Appreciation of Ballots. – The provisions of Sec. 211 of the Omnibus Election Code, whenever applicable, shall govern the appreciation of ballots. Any question on the appreciation of ballots shall be decided by a majority vote of the Committee.

No watcher or any other person inside the polling place shall be allowed to participate in the appreciation of ballots. However, any watcher may file a protest, which shall be recorded in the Minutes.

SEC. 17. Plebiscite Returns and Distribution of Copies Thereof. – Plebiscite returns shall be prepared in three (3) copies. All the members of the Committee shall sign the certification printed at the bottom of the plebiscite returns and affix their respective thumb marks on the space provided.

Upon completion of the plebiscite returns, each copy shall be placed in a separate envelope provided for the purpose, and be immediately distributed under proper receipt, as follows:

(1) The first copy, to the Municipal Plebiscite Board of Canvassers;

(2) The second copy, to the Election Records and Statistics Department of the Commission in Manila; and

(3) The third copy shall be deposited inside the ballot box.

SEC. 18. Announcement of Results. – Upon completion of the plebiscite returns, the chairman shall orally and publicly announce the total number of Affirmative and Negative Votes cast and counted in the precinct.

SEC. 19. Alterations and Corrections of Plebiscite Returns. – Any correction or alteration made in the plebiscite returns by the Committee before the announcement of the results of the plebiscite in the polling place shall be duly initiated by all the members thereof.

After the announcement of the results of the plebiscite, the Committee shall not make any alteration or amendment in any of the coies of the returns, unless authorized by the Commission.

SEC. 20. Certificate of Votes. – Before leaving the precinct, the Committee shall issue a Certificate of Votes to the watchers upon the letters' request.

SEC. 21. Delivery of the Ballot Boxes, and Other Supplies and Documents, Preservation of Voting Records, Ballot Boxes and their Keys, and their Disposition. – The provision of Section 217, 218 and 219 of the Omnibus Election Code on delivery of ballot boxes, keys and election supplies and documents, preservation of the voting records and ballot boxes and their keys, and disposition of their contents shall apply to the plebiscite governed by this Resolution.

SEC. 22. Plebiscite Board of Canvassers. – The Municipal Plebiscite Board of Canvassers (the MPBC) of Guihulngan, Negros Oriental shall canvass the plebiscite returns submitted by the Committees.

At least five (5) days before the day of the plebiscite, the chairman shall issue a written notice to the other members of the MPBC as to the convening of the MPBC, that it shall convene at six o'clock in the afternoon of July 14, 2007 to canvass the plebiscite returns. Notice of said convening shall also be posted in conspicuous places in the Municipal Hall and other public places in Guihulngan, Negros Oriental.

SEC. 23. Supervision and Control over Board. – The Commission shall have direct control of and supervision over the MPBC and may *motu proprio* relieve at any time any member thereof for cause and may substitute him in accordance with Sec. 26 hereof.

SEC. 24. Absence of a Regular Member. – In case of absence of a regular member, the members present shall first verify whether or not the notice stating the date, time and place of canvassing has been duly served on the absend regular member.

In the absence of such notice, one shall be immediately sent to the absent member. If the latter cannot be located, or is whereabouts are unknown, he shall then be substituted.

These facts shall be recorded in the respective minutes of the MPBC. As soon as the absent members appears, the substitute member shall relinquish his seat to the regular member.

SEC. 25. Incapacitated Regular Member. – In case of sickness or serious injury of the regular member, a sworn medical certificate shall be required attesting to the incapacity of said member. Upon submission of the medical certificate, a substitute shall be appointed. Said certificate shall be recorded in the Minutes of the MPBC.

SEC. 26. Substitution of Chairman and Members. – In case of non-availability, absence, disqualification due to relationship, or incapacity for any cause of the chairman, the Commission shall appoint a lawyer of the Commission as substitute. With respect to the other members of the MPBC, the Commission shall appoint as substitute the following in the order named: Municipal Administrator, the Municipal Assessor, the Clerk of Court nominated by the Executive Judge of the Municipal Trial Court, and other available appointive Municipal official.

SEC. 27. Prohibition Against Leaving Official Station. – During the period beginning July 14, 2007 until the completion of the canvass, no member or substitute member of the MPBC shall be transferred, assigned or detailed outside of his official station nor shall he leave his station without prior authority of the Commission.

SEC. 28. Quorum. – A majority of the members of the MPBC shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. A majority vote of all the members thereof shall be necessary to render a decision.

SEC. 29. Watchers: Rights and Duties. – The proponents and oppositors; registered political parties or coalition of political parties: the citizens' arm of the Commission, if any; and other accredited groups or organizations may appoint watchers during the voting, counting and canvassing. A person who is not a registered voter of the municipality, or questionable reputation, or who has been convicted of an election offense or any other crime shall not be appointed as watchers. Barangay officials, including barangay tanods, are disqualified to serve as watchers.

The watchers shall have the right to:

(a) Be present at, and take note of all the proceedings;

(b) Read the plebiscite returns without touching them; and

(c) File a protest against any irregularity noted in the plebiscite returns or in the proceedings of the MPBC, and obtain the resolution thereon in writing.

The watchers shall not be allowed to participate in the deliberation of the MPBC.

SEC. 30. Right to be Present and to Counsel. – Proponents or oppositors shall have the right to be present and to counsel during the canvass of the plebiscite returns. Only one counsel shall argue for the proponents or oppositors. In case there are several counsels for the proponents or oppositors, they shall agree among themselves who will argue for them.

SEC. 31. Internal Canvassing Procedures. – The MPBC shall canvass the plebiscite returns in the following manner:

a. The Chairman of the MPBC shall list sequentially all precincts in the Plebiscite Statement of Votes by Precinct (SOVP) and ensure that every precinct in the project of precincts is listed therein. The MPBC Chairman shall produce before the members, the ballot boxes containing plebiscite returns;

b. Before opening a ballot box, the MPBC shall record the conditions and serial numbers of the ballot boxes and the self-locking serially numbered fixed length seals;

c. The chairman of the MPBC shall then open the ballot box, retrieve the envelopes containing plebiscite returns and record in its Plebiscite Minutes of Canvass, the condition and serial number of the envelopes and their paper seales;

d. The chairman of the MPBC shall open the envelope one at a time, record the condition and serial number of the plebiscite returns and its paper seal, and forthwith open the same for canvassing;

   Only such number of envelopes containing plebiscite returns that can be canvassed during the meeting of the board shall be opened, which number shall be recorded in the Plebiscite Minutes of Canvass.

   Entries in the SOVP shall be made every time a plebiscite return is canvassed. Once all the columns of the SOVP are filled up, the members of the MPBC shall sum up the number of precincts canvassed, the number of registered voters, the number of voters who actually voted, and the total Affirmative and Negative votes therein, and thereafter affix their signatures above their names appearing at the certification portion of the form;

e. In case its copy of a plebiscite returns is missing, the MPBC shall, obtain such missing returns from the Plebiscite Committee concerned. If said returns have been lost or destroyed, the MPBC, upon prior authority of the Commission may use any of the authentic copies of said returns or a certified copy thereof issued by the Commission. Forthwith, the MPBC shall refer the case for investigation to the Regional Election Director (RED) concerned who shall report his findings to the Commission; and

f. Each time the MPBC suspends its meeting or adjourns for the purpose of awaiting for the other plebiscite returns, it shall:

   1. Determine the totals of all Affirmative and Negative votes canvassed;
   2. Accomplish the SOVP by precinct and close tha same with the initials of the members following the last entry of Affirmative and Negative votes;
   3. Place the SOVP in an envelope, which shall be sealed with a serially numbered paper seal and signed by the members in the presence of all the members of the board and the watchers; and
   4. Place the plebiscite returns already canvassed, the remaining unopened envelopes, and envelope containing a copy of the SOVP inside a ballot box which shall be locked with three padlocks and a self-locking serially numbered fixed length seal, the serial number of which shall be duly recorded in the Minutes of Canvass.

      Each member of the MPBC shall keep a key to the three padlocks of a ballot box, so that it cannot be opened without all of them being present. The ballot box shall be deposited in a secured room for safekeeping until the resumption of its meeting.

   5. At the resumption of the canvass, the Secretary of the MPBC shall:
      a. Get the ballot box from the secured room and verify the condition of the ballot box, the three padlocks and the self-locking serially numbered fixed length seal;
      b. Enter in the Minutes a description of the condition thereof, as well as the serial number of the self-locking serially numbered fixed length seals;
      c. Destroy the self-locking serially numbered fixed length seals in the presence of the other members of the board and watchers; and
      d. Present to the MPBC the remaining unopened envelopes containing plebiscite returns and the official SOVP contained in a duly sealed and signed envelope.
   6. After all the plebiscite returns assigned to it have been canvassed, the MPBC shall:
      a. Prepare a tally of the total Affirmative and Negative votes including the data on the number of registered voters, number of voters who actually voted, and the total number of precincts it has canvassed. Such tally should be publicly accessible to ensure transparency; and
      b. Place the plebiscite returns copy for the MPBC in their respective envelopes and deposit the same inside the ballot box which shall be locked with three padlocks and sealed with a self-locking serially numbered fixed length seals; and
   7. Each member of the MPBC shall keep a key corresponding to the three padlocks of the ballot box.

SEC. 32. Minutes of the Canvass of the MPBC. – The MPBC shall prepare three (3) copies of the Minutes of the Canvass.

The first copy shall be forwarded by the Secretary of the MPBC to the Law Department of the Commission within ten (10) days from termination of the canvass. The second copy shall be deposited inside the ballot box. The third copy shall be forwarded to the Office of the Deputy Executive Director for Operations.

SEC. 33. Completion of the Canvass. – The members of the MPBC shall sign the certification and affix their thumbmarks at the bottom of each SOVP, and, using a separate SOVP, consolidate the date including the total Affirmative and Negative votes. Thereafter, it shall prepare a Certificate of Canvass and Proclamation (COCP) which shall contain the following data:

1. Number of precincts canvassed;
2. Number of registered voters;
3. Number of voters who actually voted;
4. Number of Affirmative/Negative votes; and
5. Whether or not the Affirmative or Negative votes constitute a majority of the votes cast.

The COCP shall be supported by an SOVP. The members of the MPBC shall print their full names and affix their signatures and thumbmarks in the proper space at the bottom of both forms and certify under oath that the entries therein are true and correct.

SEC. 34. Distribution of the COCP. – The COCP shall be prepared in four (4) copies, supported by a Statement of Votes per Precinct, and distributed as follows:

(1) The original shall, within three (3) days from proclamation, be sent to the Election Records and Statistics Department of the Commission;

(2) The second copy shall be filed in the Office of the Election Officer of Guihulngan, Negros Oriental;

(3) The third copy shall be forwarded to the Secretary of the Department of the Interior and Local Government; and

(4) The fourth copy shall be submitted to the Municipal Mayor of Guihulngan, Negros Oriental.

SEC. 35. Applicability of the Omnibus Election Code and Other Election Laws. – The pertinent provision of the Omnibus Election Code, Republic Acts. No. 7160, 7166 and 9409 and other election laws and resolutions of the Commission which are not inconsistent herewith shall, as far as practicable, apply to the plebiscite subject of this Resolution.

SEC. 36. Implementation. – The Deputy Executive Director for Operations, assisted by the Directors of the Election and Barangay Affairs Department, Finance Services Department, shall implement this Resolution to ensure the holding of a free, orderly, honest, peaceful and credible plebiscite.

The Deputy Executive Director for Operations assisted by the Regional Election Director or Region VII and the Provincial Election Supervisor of Negros Oriental, shall supervise the conduct of the plebiscite.

SEC. 37. Dissemination. – The Education and Information Department shall cause the immediate publication of this Resolution in one (1) daily newspaper of general circulation in the Philippines and one (1) newspaper with local circulation in the Municipality of Guihulngan, Negros Oriental, and give it the widest publication and dissemination possible.

Let this Resolution be published by the Education and Information Department (EID) in a newspaper of general circulation, and in a newspaper with local circulation in Guihulngan, Negros Oriental. The Deputy Executive Director for Operations shall furnish the Regional Election Director of Region VII; the Provincial Election Supervisor of Negros Oriental; the Election Officer of Guihulngan, Negros Oriental, the Secretary of the Department of the Interior and Local Government; the Secretary of the Department of Education; and the Municipal Mayor, Municipal Treasurer and the DepEd Supervisor of Guihulngan, Negros Oriental, with copy of this Resolution.

The Election Officer of Guihulngan, Negros Oriental, shall give this Resolution the widest dissemination in his/her municipality.

SEC. 38. Effectivity. – This Resolution shall take effect upon promulgation.

SO ORDERED.

BENJAMIN S. ABALOS
Chairman

RESURRECCION Z. BORRA
Commissioner

FLORENTINO A. TUASON, JR.
Commissioner

ROMEO A. BRAWNER
Commissioner

RENE V. SARMIENTO
Commissioner

NICODEMO T. FERRER
Commissioner

(PDI–July 7, 2007)

In Loving Memory

On the **11th Death Anniversary** of

Our Beloved

ROMEO DAVID PASCUAL

January 02, 1939 – July 07, 1996

Holy Masses will be offered
at the following Churches :

Carmel of the Divine Infant Jesus of Prague,
Angeles City ..... 6:00 a.m.
Edsa Shrine, Edsa, Quezon City ..... 6:30 a.m.
San Sebastian Cathedral, Tarlac City ..... 7:00 a.m.
Immaculate Concepcion Parish Church, Angeles City 7:00 a.m.
Holy Rosary Parish, Angeles City ..... 8:30 a.m.
Our Lady of Lourdes, Tagaytay City ..... 5:30 p.m.
Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal Chapel,
Cardinal Santos Medical Center,
Greenhills, San Juan ..... 5:15 p.m.
Christ the King Parish, Greenmeadows, Quezon City .. 6:00 p.m.
Shrine of Our Lady of Manaoag, Mannong, Pangasinan .... 6:00 p.m.
Shrine of The Sacred Heart of Jesus, Dao St., Makati .... 6:00 p.m.
St. Jude Parish, San Miguel, Manila ..... 6:00 p.m.
St. Joseph the Worker Parish, Echague, Isabela ..... 6:00 p.m.
Sanctuario de San Antonio, Forbes Park, Makati ... 6:00 p.m.
Sanctuario de San Jose, Greenhills, San Juan ..... 6:15 p.m.

*Family, Relatives, Friends, and Pious Readers are requested to remember **Romy** in their prayers.*

Our Dearly Beloved

ATTY. MANUEL (Butch) A. CASTRO, SR.

(November 25, 1925 – July 3, 2007)

of Quezon City and Bacarra, Ilocos Norte

peacefully joined our Lord on July 3, 2007 at the age of 81.

His loving wife, **Nora**; loving children **Noli** and **Chie**, **Norman, Sammy, Maila** and **Allan**; grandchildren **Blaise** and **Sharon, Brian, Macy, Kay, Kristine, Kristel, Kristofer, Enzo, Jamela**; great-granddaughters **Casey** and **Bea** ; brothers, sisters and in-laws; relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Christ the King Chapel, White Plains, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Tuesday, July 10, 2007
at Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina after the 9:00 a.m. Mass.

Notify family and friends of a loved one who had just passed away.

We accept death notices, announcing details of the person's wake and interment.

For a very affordable fee you can reach out to everyone who have been a part of the life of your dearly departed.

For more information, you may contact Inquirer Classifieds at (02)897 8425.

"...absent with the body to be present with the Lord" 2 Corinthians 5:8

Our Dearly Beloved

Angelito Tamayo Felix

of Lagro, Quezon City

peacefully joined our Lord on July 4, 2007 at the age of 54.

His bereaved wife **Ofelia Agbisit Felix**, children: **Vanessa, Micah, Gelo** and other relatives and friends request the readers to join them in praying for his eternal happiness in heaven.

His body lies in state at The Sanctuarium, 739 G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on July 08, 2007 at Holy Cross Memorial Park, Novaliches, Quezon City at 11:00 a.m. after the 8:00 a.m. Mass at Chapel Fir of The Sanctuarium.

Our Dearly Beloved

MRS. GENOVEVA HUELAR TARROJA

*peacefully joined our Lord and her husband **Nicolas A. Tarroja** on July 6, 2007 at the age of 85.*

Her children, **Ela** and **Fred Keller, Espy** and **Maxi Lizardo**, and **Caring Tarroja**; grandchildren **Nathaniel, Jonathan** and **Patricia**, and all relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Chapel B6, La Funeraria Paz, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be announced later.

CONRADO *'DADONG'* O. AURE

Former Municipal Mayor,
Mendez-Nunez, Cavite
Colonel (Retired) Philippine Air Force

peacefully joined his Creator on July 3, 2007 at the age of 79.

His body lies in state at the family residence in Mendez-Nunez, Cavite.

Interment will be on Sunday, July 8, 2007 at Mendez-Nunez Municipal Cemetery after the 12 noon Mass at St. Augustine Church.

Readers are requested to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

For your Classified Ads requirements, call our Classifieds Advertising Hotlines:
Head Office:
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loc. 514, 516;
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Makati:
892-5578; 811-4361;
811-4370
Kalaw:
528-0213; 527-3342
Megamall:
635-0219; 635-0220

ATTY. RENATO R. PASIMIO

passed away on July 4, 2007 at the age of 90.

His children Jun (†) and Lily, Mimi and Totoy, Kit and Calet, Rolly and Nene, Maribelle and Rocky, Yollyn (†), Eric and Edith, Jojo and Pam, Judy and his other relatives request your prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Chapel-B, La Funeraria Paz, G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Tuesday, July 10, 2007 at the Holy Cross Memorial Park, Novaliches, Q.C. after the 9:00 a.m. Mass.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

Always caring.
INQUIRER OBITUARIES

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS: ❶ Copy of Death Certificate
❷ Any identification document (I.D.)
WE ACCEPT CREDIT CARDS and bank-to-bank payments.

CLASSIFIEDS

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS
NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
BIR Road, East Triangle, Diliman, Quezon City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The **NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION (NTC)** is inviting interested and legitimate suppliers to apply for eligibility and to submit bid proposals for the supply of the **Upgrading of Audio and Video Equipment** for the Commission. The approved budget is **P8,385,024.00.**

Registration requirements can be secured from **Ms. Sophia Lynn B. Lumantod**, Head, NTC BAC Secretariat, NTC Bldg., BIR Road, East Avenue, Quezon City, beginning **09 July 2007**, to be submitted not later than **19 July 2007, 5:00 P.M.**, through the NTC-BAC Secretariat.

Notification of registered suppliers and issuance of bid documents to registered suppliers shall be from **25-27 July 2007** upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Eight Thousand Pesos (P8,000.00).

Pre-bid Conference will be on **01 August 2007 at 2:00 P.M.** at the NTC Office, NTC Bldg., BIR Road, East Avenue, Quezon City.

Deadline for submission is on **30 August 2007 at 2:00 P.M.**, and opening of the bids will be also on **30 August 2007 at 2:15 P.M.**, respectively. Bidders shall submit **four (4) separate sealed envelopes;** two (2) envelopes containing the technical component of the bid, one (1) envelope duly marked as Original and the other as a Copy, and two (2) envelopes containing the financial component of the bid, one (1) envelope duly marked as Original and the other as a Copy. All communications must be addressed to the undersigned in the above-specified address.

Prospective bidders shall signify conformance to bidding terms and conditions as required and shall ensure the same through proper submission/execution in accordance with **Republic Act 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations.**

The NTC reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any defect or informality of the bid proposals received and to accept and award the bid to the bidder whose proposal is considered most advantageous to the Government. The NTC assumes no obligation whatsoever to compensate or indemnify any bidder for expenses or loss that it may incur in the preparation/process of the bids, nor does it guarantee that an award will be made.

(Sgd.) JAIME M. FORTES, JR.
Chairman, BAC

(PDI – July 7, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Transportation and Communications
CIVIL AERONAUTICS BOARD

IN RE: APPLICATION FOR AUTHORITY TO OPERATE AS AN INTERNATIONAL AIRFREIGHT FORWARDER
Jalien International Cargo Systems, Inc.
Applicant
) CAB CASE NO. 29591

NOTICE OF APPLICATION

Pursuant to the provision of Republic Act No. 776, as amended, Notice is hereby given that Jalien International Cargo Systems, Inc. have filed with the Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB) applications for authority to operate as an International Airfreight Forwarder. The applications shall be given due course by this Board on or before 02 August 2007.

Parties opposed to the granting of these applications must file their written opposition, supported by documentary evidence on or before the aforesaid date, furnishing a copy of the same to the applicant, and if any so desire, appear before this Board on the said date. Failure on the part of any interested party to register its opposition on time shall be construed as a waiver of its right to be heard. Thereupon, the Board shall act upon the application on the basis of the records and documentary evidence presented by the parties, unless the Board deems it necessary to receive additional documentary and/or testimonial evidence.

The applicant is required to have this Notice of Application published at least once a week for two (2) consecutive weeks in a newspaper of general circulation, and/or have copies thereof sent to existing airfreight forwarders either by personal service or registered mail with return card at least five (5) days before 02 August 2007.

Let a copy of the application and this Notice be posted on the CAB Bulletin Board beginning this day.

02 July 2007
Pasay City, Philippines

(Sgd.) **MARIA ELBEN SL MORO**
OIC, Legal Division

cc: **Jacqueline Ambrosio**
President
Rm. 650 Padilla Bldg.,
232 Juan Luna St.,
Binondo, Manila

(PDI - July 7 & 14, 2007)

People, Events & Products

BITS & Clips

SME Development Week

THE 2007 SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISE (SME) DEVELOPMENT WEEK, with the theme "Ang Galing Mo Pinoy! Go Negosyo" will be celebrated from July 16-22. During the event, there will be free entrepreneurial briefings on July 19-22 at Seminar Rooms A & B, Megatrade Halls 1 and 2 of SM Megamall. The briefing sessions are aimed at equipping existing and would-be entrepreneurs with the basic and advance inputs in improving the management of their respective businesses. These trainings will be provided by various government and private agencies such as DA, DENR, DOLE, DOST, DTI, BAP, PBSP, UPISSI, and Globe Telecoms. For further inquiries and reservations, call Carissa Sapera or Edwin Pasahol of the SMED Council Secretariat at 817-9693, 897-7596 or 890-4968.

PMA markets Guerilla Principles to students

FATHER OF GUERILLA MARKETING, JAY CONRAD LEVINSON, WILL BE VISITING Manila for the Strategic Marketing Conference slated on July 27, at the Araneta Coliseum, Cubao, Quezon City. Invited by the Philippine Marketing Association (PMA), the country's premiere marketing organization, Levinson, who worked as senior vice president of J. Walter Thompson in the US and is the author of the much celebrated book, "Guerilla Marketing," was the key figure that initiated the world-wide revolution of marketing tactics that the international market has never seen before. Coinciding with the conference is a competition for students where PMA will once again put young minds to test so they may be pushed to think innovatively and creatively to produce and subsequently defend marketing tactics. Cash prizes, plaque, individual medals, and certificates await the winning team. For more information, you may contact the PMA Secretariat at 634-4890 or 634-5722.

Big Time lunch options at Greenwich

THERE IS NOW A WAY TO SATISFY BOTH YOUR HUNGER PANG AND YOUR value-conscious pocket, without limiting yourself to the same lineup of food choices everyday. Known for its creativity and innovativeness in developing a variety of choices for the growing demand of the market, Greenwich, the Philippines' no. 1 pizza chain, has opened its doors to let in the lunch crowd who are rushing to avail of the new Big Time meals. Choose from Big Time meal: #1 - comes with Hawaiian pizza bar, meaty spaghetti, and softdrink for P49 only; #2 - featuring meaty spaghetti, 1 piece crispy fried chicken, and softdrink for P69 only; #3 - a sumptuous combination of Hawaiian pizza bar, meaty spaghetti, 1 piece crispy fried chicken and softdrink for P89 only; #4 - plate of Hawaiian pizza bar, meaty spaghetti, 1 piece crispy fried chicken with rice, softdrink, and a brownie for P109 only. Those who want to surprise their friends with Big Time meals at the office may avail of Greenwich's Delivereach food delivery service that allows customers to order from any Greenwich store and have them delivered anywhere in the Philippines where Greenwich Delivery is available. For a minimum order of P200, customers can simply go to any Greenwich store, place and pay for their orders, and their orders will be delivered by the assigned Greenwich delivery store that serves their recipients' delivery address. For Metro Manila deliveries, call Greenwich "Garantisadong On-Time" delivery 5-55-55.

Maybank Business Solutions

MAYBANK PHILIPPINES RECENTLY STRENGTHENED ITS CASH MANAGEMENT services to offer alternative answers to routine business processes that have of late become complex tasks. Maybank Business Solutions offer a menu of cash management facilities that simplifies payroll, check preparation and collection. These facilities - Payroll Manager, Payroll Manager Plus, Payroll Master, Cash Collect, Check Warehousing, Bills Payment and Check Master - provide permanent solutions that are high on user benefits but low on the operational expense. Business Solutions is brought to you by the Maybank Cash Management Services (CMS) team, committed to deliver Creative (Customized, ready to Use, efficient, All In One, Technology-driven, Innovative, Value for Money, and Essential to Business) solutions, consistent with the bank's core values to provide excellent service to its clientele. For inquiries about Maybank Business Solutions' host of superior products, you may call 524-8911 or 523-7777 extension 178.

Petron Sandosenang Milyonaryo Promo

JOIN THE PETRON SANDOSENANG MILYONARYO PROMO AND GET THE chance to be one of the 12 winners of P1 million. Every P300 cash purchase of any Petron product gives you one raffle entry. Petron-BPI Mastercard holders and Petron Fleetcard members get two raffle entries for every P300 single receipt purchase – doubling the chances of winning! How to register: for cash purchases, text PETRON < space > REG < space >< name >/< complete address >and send to 2366. Registration is free of charge. For Petron-BPI Mastercard holders, SMS text is in this format PETRON < space > REG < space >< last four digits of the Petron-BPI Mastercard >/< name >/< complete address > and send to 2366. For Petron Fleet Card Holders, SMS text is in this format PETRON < space > REG < space >< last five digits of the Petron Fleet Card >/< name >/< complete address > and send to 2366. How to send entries: Text Petron < space >< receipt number or invoice number of the transaction slip for Fleet Card Holders >/< amount purchased >/< station ID > and send to 2366. Promo period is from May 7 to Sept. 6.

Toshiba launches HD DVD player

TOSHIBA LAUNCHES THE FIRST STANDALONE HD DVD Player HD-E1 in the Philippines. HD DVD, pioneered by Toshiba and endorsed by the worldwide DVD Forum as the standard format for high definition DVD, is the final ingredient for a complete high definition system. Toshiba HD-E1 delivers all the clarity and detail of true high definition and next generation multi-channel sound reproduction. Not only does it play HD DVDs, it also plays standard DVDs, and actually upscales them to near HD quality. The base disc structure of HD DVD is the same as standard DVD, but that is where the similarities end. HD DVD combines the latest advances in video compression with new laser technologies to provide high definition content on a disc. HD DVD offers five times the resolution of a standard DVD. HD DVD supports the next generation digital audio formats to bring multi-dimensional sound to match the superior picture quality. HD DVD also redefines interactive entertainment, with advance navigation for new levels of involvement in disc content and incredible potential for new features through a seamless Internet connection. Search the menu, change the settings, search for a scene, add a commentary or get more information from the Internet, all could be done while the movie is playing. Price and availability - P39,990. For information, contact GoldWay Digital Equipment Inc at (02)875-0005 or visit major appliance store.

Acer still tops in notebooks and desktops

ACER MAINTAINED ITS LEADERSHIP IN THE CONSUMER NOTEBOOK AND desktop category in the Philippines for the first three months of the year, again outpacing all other branded competitors in the local PC market. According to the latest IDC PC Tracker Summary, in the consumer notebook category, Acer posted a total of shipment of 7,106 units, equivalent to a 31 percent market share. In the consumer desktop category, on the other hand, Acer is also at number 1 position with 3,314 units shipped for a 6.7-percent market share. In the commercial notebook category, the IDC PC Tracker Summary bared that Acer also topped the list with 4,274 units sold for a 23-percent market share. The company also posted significant rankings in the overall PC category by coming in at number 2, coming in with 18,048 units sold for an 8.4-percent market share. According to IDC, for the first quarter of this year, the consumer notebook and desktop markets contributed largely to the PC market's growth in the Philippines, where total PC shipments grew 1.9 percent sequentially and 12.2 percent year-on-year, which was close to IDC's expectations.